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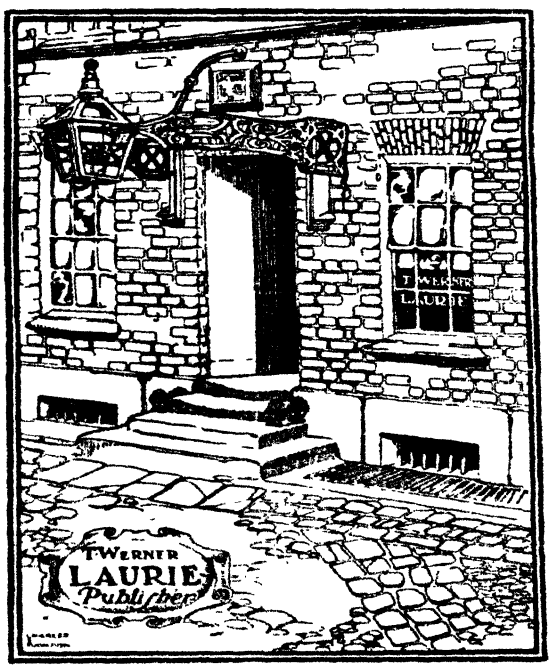
NINE TALES FROM THE CONTES DROLATIQUES



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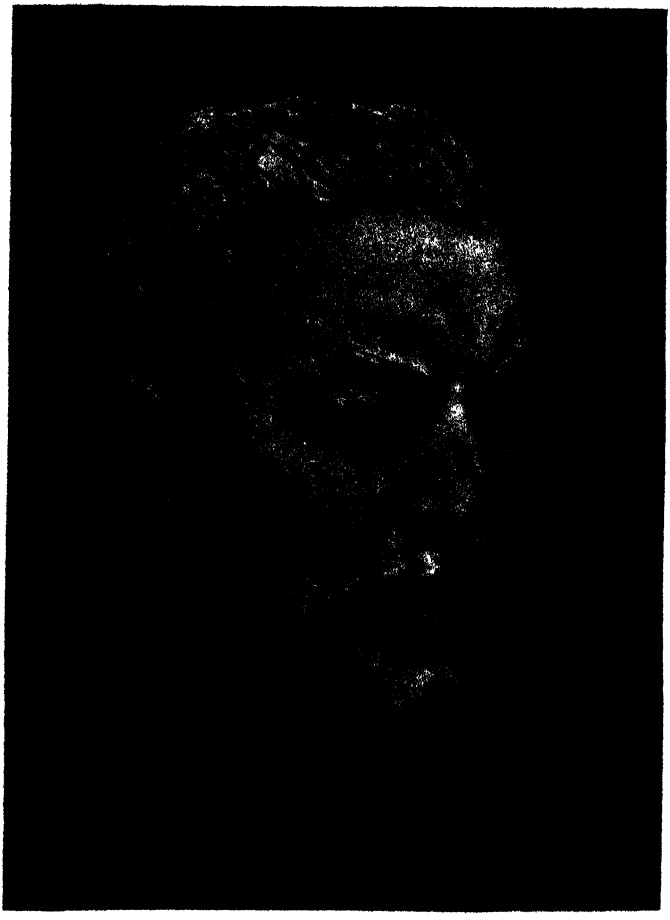

VELER BODIN
HONORE DE BALZAC

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

AFTER RODIN

NINE TALES FROM
THE
CONTES DROLATIQUES
OF
HONORÉ DE BALZAC

Rendered into English of the
XIVth and XVIth Centuries

BY

ROBERT CRAWFORD

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By George Moore.

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Avowals.
Esther Waters.
The Coming of Gabrielle.
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A Portrait of George Moore in a Study of His Work.

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NINE TALES FROM THE
CONTES DROLATIQUES

This Edition consists of 600 copies numbered
and signed.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Balzac defines these stories as "Etudes analytiques," thus letting us infer, even before we read them, that his purpose was to hold the mirror up to nature. Being no more a doctrinaire than Gower, Chaucer, or Shakespeare, he believes that there is a soul of goodness in things evil and indeed, as he says in the "Develes Heir," that good and evil are intermingled in this world. His conclusion is that the wise man should take life as it is, be diligent and joyful and endeavour to spread happiness around him. It is the philosophy of Pythagoras.

No wonder then that Balzac should be merry even when he is most in earnest.

Victor Hugo said of the author of the "Contes Drolatiques" that his gifts are: observation and imagination. These are faculties more essential than even speech, for they are inherited by man from long generations and far-back genera of dumb yet upward-striving ancestors and go deeper into the mind.

They account for the wonderful colour, intensity and dramatic interest of these tales.

Balzac in his preface acknowledges his indebtedness

indebtedness to his master Rabelais; and, to be sure, the points of likeness between those two great Frenchmen are striking. They both put on a mask of comedy and rakishness in order to write with more freedom about manners, customs, politics, and religion.

The French will forgive a man for telling them truth if he make them but smile. The English in such a case would rather condemn him for levity, holding, with Bacon, that religion, matters of State and great persons should be exempted from jest. And yet satire is often the only weapon available against privilege, injustice and superstition.

It is well to consider the period in which these tales were published; it was a few months after the Revolution of 1830, which slew the giants of absolutism and theocracy. When they were first planned by the author, sacrilege was a capital crime, and the press was subject to a censorship more rigid than we knew during the Great War.

Balzac, who was a writer for all time, like Shakespeare, was also very much of his own age. His mediæval warriors are portraits of Napoleon's marshals, and his kings, courtiers and ladies were no doubt objects of scandal-gossip at the Tuileries; his prelates and monks are men of flesh and bone, and Friar Amador, far from being a caricature, is but a good-natured

natured likeness of Fra Ciavolino, the Neapolitan amorous and strangling monk, now serving a sentence of 24 years' solitary confinement in Italy.

Balzac is one of the men that, like Jean Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire, have moulded modern France; for the French let writers shape their civilization more than we do. In the "Contes Drolatiques" are found suggestions which, 50 years later, ripened in disestablishment, woman's emancipation, and laws for the protection of illegitimate children. ("All children," writes our author, "are sent by God.")

There is another reason why these Tales should be regarded as a beacon in literature. They are, if I am right, the last flicker of the Renascence in the early part of the 19th century; the rest of Balzac's work belongs to late modern times. This point cannot very well be stated briefly in words, but it may be illustrated by a comparison: in English cathedrals and cloisters you see tablets of the early 19th century, the motive of which is an urn in bas-relief on a white marble background. They are the last memorial-stones of the style, outlook and tradition which sprang into being under Henry the Eighth. These tablets bear dates down to 1830 and then disappear. Afterwards all is eclecticism and anarchy. In the same period, in France, the Charles the Tenth style of architecture, decoration and furniture,

furniture, though falling away from First Empire purity, still belonged to a 300 years' unbroken tradition. And that perished, too, about 1830. The authority of tradition, or "good taste" as it was called, then made way for the authority of demand; and this is supreme to-day.

The "Contes Drolatiques" are perhaps the last great work that was written without any regard to popularity or sales; which detachment is as Renascence-like as it is unmodern. In writing them in old French, the author only multiplied his difficulties and lost readers. But he reared a monument to the Renascence not unworthy to be compared with the pillar set up by Rabelais at the beginning of that period.

It has occurred to me that Balzac, in writing the "Succubus" may have had in mind the character of Mary Magdalene, and that the subject of that story might be stated thus: "What would have happened to Mary Magdalene if she had lived again in the Christian city of Tours in the 13th century?" I allude, of course, to the saint held by tradition, though not by modern secular criticism, to be identical with the loose-lived woman mentioned in St. Luke vii. and called Mary Magdalene in the headlines of the chapter.

A modern Spanish writer has chosen for a novel a theme after all not so very dissimilar, viz.: "How Jesus Christ would have been dealt with

with by the Holy Inquisition if he had come to Seville in the Middle Ages." The following, I think, are reasons for identifying the "Succubus" with Mary of Magdala:

They both had long hair, they loved much, they were possessed of devils, they were emotional and wept easily, they led a life of sin, they performed good works, they were strangers, they were disliked by respectable people, they used precious ointments, etc.

I have been asked: Why have I used an old vocabulary to translate these Tales into old English? My answer is: Because the originals were done in old French. May this reason be accepted by the reader as my excuse for attempting to dress up 19th century tales in a mediæval garb.

THE VENIAL SINNE

HOW THE GODE MAN BRUYN TOOK WYF

SIR BRUYN, he which that up-builte the castel of the Roche-Corbon-bisyde-Vouvray by Loyre, was a bold knight in youthe. For thus erly he shente maydenes, slong maner-houses out at windowe and gan wende him to the devel, whan so bi-fel he leyde on bere his fader, the baroun of the Roche-Corbon. Wel coude he thanne make, day by day, a sevene candle-stikkes feste and werke with two hondes toward his desport.

So longe dide he fnese his florins, coughe his cod-pece, blede pounsons, rejoyse hoded byrdes and wasten his possessiouns, til he was banned of gentil folk. Ne frendes hadde he none mo, save lond-byeres and lombardes; and they bi-comen prikliche as barkes of chesteynes whan he no-thing more mighte leye to borwe, for-as-mochel as his forseyde lordshipe of the Roche-Corbon, he heeld it in fee of oure lige. Thanne, caughte he minde to stryken with swerde to right syde and left, to breken ribbes and priken quereles for nought. Which, as his neighebour saugh, th'abbot of Marmoustiers,

tiers, a man of tunge large, he tolde Bruyn that tokenes were thise of lordly chevalry, that he was holdinge the heighe wey, but yet bet it were if he wente disconfite, to glorie of godde, the maumets that defoulede holy lond; he sholde comen ayein ful of richesse or pardouns, eyther to londe of Tours or to hevene, whenne barouns were first descended.

This ilke Bruyn, wondringe on swich wisdom, out-wente, harneysed forth with th'abbot and y-blessed, under the blythenesse of neigheboures and freendes. By processe of tyme, he pilled tounes manye of Asye and Auffrike and leyde on the hethene; he yaf folk no werning and felde sarasenes, grewes, englisshe men and outhere, no fors whe'r freendes or noon; for, among his desertes, he nought was inquisitif and nought axed hem but slowh first. By this mene, plesinge to godde, king and him, Bruyn wan fame of trewe knight cristen and joyed in ferne londes, for him were lever take a florin til a wenche than a ferthing til a pore man, how so be he mette with mo comliche povre than parfite baudes. But, as he that was of Tours, he maked his potage with any breed. Til on a day, replet of turkisshe wyves, relikes and othre benefices, Bruyn com out of holy londe, to greet surpryse of tho of Vouvray, combred of florins and preciouse stones, al the revers of somme whiche, as they were riche whan they wenten forth, repeirede ayein hevy of meseles

and

and lighte of sylvre. Oure lord king Philippe, retourned fro Tewnes, maked him erl and lord styward in oure countee and in Poytou. Thanne, was he rightly bi-loved and holden amonges grete, wel the more that, over alle his shene qualitees, he dide builden the bar-fote carmes chirche in Esgrignolles, parisshe, for to aquyte heven of his loose dayes; so that he throf mochel in grace of holy-chirche and godde. Whylom a bad wight and a misdoer, he worthed to good man, wys and sleighly revelous as he loste his heres. Selden wex he wrooth but men blasphemed of god, the whiche he nolde nat here: he hadde seyd wikkede othes, mo than his deel, of his wilde youthe. Shortly, no stryf hadde he now, for, sithen he was heigh styward, alle men were redy to his honde; and, having his fille of any thing, he was, like a wel-fed feendikin, ydel and quiet fro heed to fote. And now, oughte he a castel y-crinkled to and fro, everich wal, and al to-slitered as a spanish kirtel, lokinge from an hille adoun in Loyre as in a mirour. His halles were bigoon of royalle ostelments on whiche wondrede tho of Tours: tapites, kerved devyses, sarsinesshe pompes and fantasyes, and a baner of orfrays which he yaf of his yifte to the erchebisshop and the clerkes of seynt Martin's. Aboute thilke castel, ther straughte fayre londes with wind-melles and holtes. wher-of he hadde grete rentes and soken; thus, oon he was the welthieste of the province and

mighte

mighte lede to bataille o thousand men under the king. In-with his olde dayes if, haply, his bailly, a man egre for to honge folk, him forth broughte any pore cherl suspicious of som misdeed, he used smylinge to seyn: "Lat him goon, Breddif, he shal stonde in myn acounte ayeins any I dide deye over-hastifly yond."

Ofte also, leet he knightly doon an-hange folk up-on his galwe-trees or lolle up on an oke; yet it was but for kepinge of rightwisenesse, and for that the usance nat fille aweye. And ther-fore, were his underlinges meke and swete as newe nonnes and liveden in pees, sauf from outlawes and theves, for whiche cursed beestes of praye ne yede gold ne fee whan he caughte hem. Ther-with he was right devocious, redy til al good thing: masses or mighty wyn. He spedde his cases in court after turkish fasoun castinge forth japes o thousand to tho that loste and dyninge with hem for the bet to maken hem laughe. The men he hanged, he dide burien in halwed grounde as they were longinge to godde, for him thoughte they were punisshed y-nough as he hem letted to liven. And fynally to seye, he amerced the jewes nat but whan tyme was, whan they swollen were of usure and pens. He lat hem asemble hony as a swarm of been, seyinge, they weren the beste fermoures of tax; and he despoiled hem but to the gayn and use of chirche folk, of the king, the province or himself. This freendlinesse gat him the herte and prys of al and somme,

more

more and lasse. Whan that he com hoom, smylinge, fro his sete of justyse, the abbot of Marmoustiers, old as he, wolde seye: "What: have ye hanged folk, ye laughe so?" Whan he rood to Tours, the litle maydes of Seynt Symphorien, suburb, seyde: "It is day of audiénce, lo! ther gooth he, the gode man Bruyn," and gunne faste bi-holde him and his deyntee whyt hakenay y-brought from eest-warde. And the lyte knaves by the brigge, forletinge hir gamen of marbul-stones, cryede up-on him:

"God yeve yow good day, my lord."

To which he answerde ayein, a-game:

"Make merie, my litle sones, til ye be whipped."

"Yis, my lord."

Lo, so happy was the contree and clene swopen of theves that, in the yere of the grete Loyre flode, ther nas but two-and-twenty an-hanged, with-oute a jew y-brent in Chasteau-Neuf, village, bi-cause he hadde stolen an hoste, or bought, as it telleth, for he was riche.

Up-on a day, the yeer next after, ayein Seynt-Johannes day of hey-making tyme—Seynt-Johan-the-Moweres day, as we seggen in Toureyne—ther com by the londe egipciens, bohemiens or othre thevisshe routes that dide a thefte of halwed thing at Seynt Martin's and leften, in place and stede of oure lady the Vergene and in scorninge and hethinge of holy chirche,

chirche, a vileyns joly mayde, of age tweyes as an old dogge, a timbestere, al naked and sarasene lyk hem-self. Of this unherd of forfet, was concluded y-liche of kinges folk and tho of the chirche that the sarasene wenche sholde paye for al and be brent and y-scalded al quik neigh the founteyn, amidde Seynt Martin's carrefax ther-as the comune herbe market is. Thanne, shewed fayre and skilfully the gode man Bruyn how speedful a thing it were and plesaunt to godde, for to fecche this auffrican soule un-to the trewe feyth and, if the feend in thilke wyfly body made it tough, drye stikkes wantede not to brenne hir as by the sentence.

This doom, the erchebisshop thoughte it was wys, trewe to the boke, to cristen charitee and gospel. The gentil men and ladyes of the toune pleynde aloude, they were bi-gyled of a fyn desport, sithen that the morisca weep hir lyf awey in gayle and wailled as tyed goot; and she wolde, seur, torne to godde so that she livede forth as longe as a crowe. Ther-ayeins, the heigh-styward answerde that, if the fremde wenche sette hir holily to the cristene bileve, he wolde purveyen a feste and revel statliere by a thousand deel and royally proud, for godfader wolde he ben in the baptisme and mayde sholde ben his godsib by cause of plesinge god the more; for him-self, as folk wende, was a beau-coq. In oure londe of Tours, so calleth men yonge knave-maydes, unwedded

unwedded or holden for swiche, thus for to telle hem fro weddede or widweres. But the wenches kenne hem out wel with-oute the name, for-as-mochel as they are lighte and joly, more than outhere bi-dropped with mariage.

The sarasene wenche wavered nat bitwixe the brond and the water; hir hadde lever ben cristen al quik than brent egipcien. Thus, as she nolde nat be scalded duringe an inche space, she moste ay brenne as in hir herte sithen she was put, for more borwe to hir religioun, up in a nonnerye neigh the Chardonneret wher she maked avow of lyfholinesse. The laste ende of the forseide forme, it was atte erchebisshoppes house wher, for the nones, was daunced and maad mery for honour of oure saveour by ladyes and gentile men of Toureyne, a contree ther-as men daunceth, singeth, et, bibbeth, halt mo revelous sopers and doth mo merye thing than in any other in erthe. The gode olde heigh-styward took for his godsib the doughter to the lord of Azay-le-Ridel, that y-clept was in after tyme Azay-le-Bruslé; the whiche lord, being marked with the holy croys and went to Surryë, fil a prisounere biforn Accra, a right fer toun, in hondes of a sarasene, which that axede a royal raunsoun, for-why this ilke lord was richely biseyn.

Lady Azay leyde hir heritage to wedde with lombardes the somme for to finden and was laft

laft withoute a masse-peny, abydinge hir syre in a streit logging, withoute a tapite wher-on to sitte, proud as the quene of Saba and bold as a grehound kepinge his maysteres cloutes. This grete distresse, the heigh-styward as he saugh it, he wente delicatly aske at the damoysele of Azay that she be godmoder to thilke egipcien wenche, for thanne mighte he kythe som kindenesse on Lady Azay. An hevy cheyne of golde he hadde, wonnen atte conqueste of Cypre, and he shoop for to festne it aboute the hals of his fetys godsib; but he shredde his londes, whyte heres, byzaunts and hakenays; shortly, he feffed his love with every thing as swythe as he saugh Blaunche Azay dauncinge a roundel amonges the ladyes of Tours.

How so it be, the sarasene mayde, which tripped merie as for hir laste day, astoned hadde the congregacioun with hir love-daunces, turninges, springes, reyes and othre uncouthe thing, yet for al that, Blaunche paste hir by voys of alle, so virgenely and comly she was of hir-self.

Now, Bruyn, as he stood bi-holdinge this gente damoysele whos lighte feet desdeyned the floor, gladinge for hir sevenetene yeer of age, as greshoppe twicchinge his fithele, was touched with an old mannes desyr, a frenetyk and kene desyr, bred of wayknesse, that dide him hete fro foot to nekke only; his heed was to hoor, love mighte nat dwelle ther. With that,

that, the gode man understood how him wanted wyf; he wende his maner now duller than yet it was. And what was worth a castel with-oute a casteleyne? As good, lo, a clapper with-oute a belle. A wyf, shortly were his oon comfort to desyren. Wher-fore hadde he wil to hir anon, sithen that, if lady Azay lete him tarien, he mighte wel, er longe, gon out of this worlde un-to next oon. But, by the revel of the baptisme, he bi-thoughte him lyte up-on his dede woundes and yet lasse up-on the eightety yeres wel told that balled hadde his top. His eyen, he wende they were clere y-nough, for he saugh apertly his yonge godsib which that, at bidding of Lady Azay, fested him wel in speche and countenaunce, wening no peril ne lay bi-syde swich old compeer. For which Blaunche, grene and gilelees that she was, al the revers of maydes of Tours that alle awaked arn as a morwe of May, allowed the gode man to kisse hir hond, first, and, thanne, hir nekke, (" a litel lowe," seyde the erchebisshop which maried hem the wouke next after); and ther was a fair brydale and a fairer bryd.

Sclendre was this ilke Blaunche, ther nas noon of swich fairnesse; and, bet yet, mayde was she as any maydens never were. Mayden she was so, she niste nat what was love, neyther why and how it was haunted; mayden so, she wende babes were broughte adoun with storkes. As in that poynt, hir moder hadde fostred hir innocent; never hadde she lete hir

yet

yet avyse, nat the leeste myte, how she eet hir soupe in bitwixen hir teeth. Thilke child was ther-fore a flour of floures, pleyful and unconninge, an aungel that wanted but of winges for to fleighe with to paradys. And whan she rood adoun fro the streite logging of hir biwopen moder toward the wedding-forme atte chirche of Seynt Gacien and Seynt Maurice the burel folk comen hider to fede hir eyen of the sighte of thilke bryd and of the tapites sprad endelong Sadleres strete; and alle seyde that never hadde deyntiere feet goon on erthe of Tours, ne lovliere perse eyen loked on hevene, ne fairere feste caused to bi-hange the strete of tapites and floures. The maydenes of the toune, tho of Seynt Martin and of Chasteau-Neuf burgh, they alle envyede of the longe and yelwe tresses with whiche Blaunche hadde, wisly, fisshed hir-selve a countee, but, forther over, they hadde longing to the brydes clooth of gold, stones of the rede see, whyte dyamauntz and to the cheynes she pleyde with, that bounde hir, lo, for ever. So was th' olde werreyour delyted, his joye brast thurgh alle his wrinkles, lokinges or moevinges. Al were he, ay, streight as a sikel, he wente up-right by Blaunche: he semed a serjaunt in mustre in the feelde; and he leyde hond on brest as a man that plesaunce achoketh and acloyeth. The maydenes, as that they herde the clateringe belles and bi-helde the pride and blandisshements of thilke wedding, of which hadde been spoken

spoken sithen the bisshoppes feste, they gunne morne for vendáges of sarasene maydes, rayn-flodes of olde heigh-stywardes and paniers fulle of egipciene cristeninges. But, thilke was that onliche oon that ay was, for Toureyne is fer from Egipte or Beeme. To Lady Azay was yeven a large somme of gold after the mariage-masse ther-of she dide hir entente; and she wente eft-sones til Accra-wardes ayeins hir forseide housbonde, in-fere with the lieutenant and footmen of th' erl of the Roche-Corbon which that payed for al the cost. She lafte on the wedding-day whan she hadde bi-taken hir doughter to the heigh-styward and preyed him to use hir wel. Somme yeres ther-after, she com hoom with hir housbonde, a lazar, and broughte him to hele, helpinge him at peril to be blemished hir-self, the whiche men gretly preysed.

After gestes hadde gladed been with three dayes festes, Lord Bruyn ladde the litel wight in heigh honour to the grete lordly bour, over-sprad of grene silk y-brouded ful of floures of gold, and, as is gyse of newe maried folk, leyde hir solempnly in his bedde that y-blessed was with th' abbot of Marmoustiers. Whan old Bruyn, al embawmed, was flesh to flesshe by his bryd, he kiste hir, first, on the forheed, thanne, on the rounde and whyte breste in thilke place ther-as she hadde allowed him to louken hir the coler of the broche; but that was al. The olde grisel hadde wend to wel of him-selve in thinkinge

thinkinge he coude unknitten ought elles; and thanne, slaked he of love, for any layes of mariage, minstralcyes, glees and gaye thinges seyd or songe binethe in the halles wher daunced was yet. He conforted him-self with a draughte of spyced wyn that had y-blessed been, as was usaunce, y-set bisyde hem in a gold coppe; which wyn him warmede wel his stomak but nat the herte of his abated cod-pece. Blaunche nought wondred on his felonye for she was a mayde as in soule and of wedlok she aperceived nought but that that sheweth to mayden eyen as, garnements, festes, horses; and swiche thinges as for to ben a lady and maistresse, to winne a countee, make joye and reulen. Wher-fore, pleyde she childly with the gold akornes of the bedde and maked merveyle on the richesse of the chalon in which sholde be beried hir flour. Al be it som what late, the seneschal felte his gilt: he triste to tyme—cominge al though it wasted every day a party of that he mente to feste with his wyf, and he was fayn to yeve hir wordes for dedes. So he gan seye al maner thing by this and that; he highte hir the keyes of his holdes, gerners and chestes, the governaunce of his houses and demesnes with-outen any lette and, so as folk seyth in Toureyne, he heng aboute hir nekke the cantel of breed. She was as a ful-hot yong dextrer and demed hir gode man, he was the gentilleste in erthe; so, sit-tinge up-right, she gan smylen, and she wex

yet

yet gladder lokinge on that fayre bed of grene samit ther, fro this forth, she hadde leve, certes, to slepe night by nighte. As he saugh hir al redy to pleye, the praty lord that ne hadde met but with fewe maydenes and only knew by comune strompetes whiche apes ben thilke on the fether-bed, was adrad of the pleyes slye, skippinge kisses and giblettes of love to whiche he hadde never been recreaunt er but to whiche he sholde ben, as now, cold as a popes *obit.* Wher-fore, he moeved him bakwarde to the beddes-syde, dredinge of his happe and seyde to his over-delitable bryd:

"Wel, dere herte, ye be now y-worthen heigh-stywardesse and verray lady."

"Nay," quod she.

"Wher-fore 'nay'?" quod he, "ben ye nat wel ladyed?"

"No," answerde she, "that ne shal I nat ben but if I have a child."

"Sawe ye the grene medes by the weye?" seyde the gode man eft.

"Ye," quod she.

"Wel, they ben youre."

"O! I wol have mochel joye ther, in renninge after boterflyes."

"That is wysly seyd," quod the lord. "And sawe ye the wodes?"

"Ye, I ne kepe for to ben in hem by my-self and ye sholde me take aboute."

"But," quod she, "as reche me a lyte of that draughte

draughte that La Ponneuse hath medled til us with swich care."

"Why so, dere herte, ye sholde sette your body a-fyre."

"Do!" quod she, freting for despyt, "I have a wil to yeve yow blyve a child and, for ought I see, thilke ipocras helpeth ther-to."

"Lo, lo! my litel prymerole," seyde the seneschal which wiste by this word that Blaunche a mayde was fro heved to fote, "goddes good wil nedeth erst; and thanne, sholden wommen been in flouringe tyme."

"Whan shal I be so?" axed she smylinge.

"Al so sone as natúre voucheth sauf," quod he, a-game.

"This is than the cause," quod she with pensif chere, "why moder weep of thilke forshapinge of myn. Yet Bertha de Preuilly, that so wel plesed is for she is maked wyf, tolde me no-thing nas esier in worlde."

"It is al after the age," answerde the olde lord, "but have ye seyn in the stable that fayre whyte hakenay men of speketh so mochel?"

"Ye, she is gente and ful lykinge."

"Wel, I yeve yow hir to ryden up-on as ofte as yow list."

"Heer," seyde he eft, "dere herte, the boteler, chapelleyn, tresoroure, squyer, cook bailly, ye, yet the yonge knight Walter Montsoreau that bereth my baner, and eek his yemen, capitaynes, gomes and bestes, alle ben redy

redy to your bidding or they shullen be pyned with the corde."

"But," seyde she eft, "this alkamistres maystrie, ne can it nat be doon at ones?"

"No," seyde the seneschal, "aboven any thing, we owen ben, us-selven, rightwyse to-forn god; for elles sholde we han a badde child covered under sinnes, which is expres ayeins canoun of holy chirche. How elles comen unbuxome lorels in erthe? Hir eldres, they not abiden wysly for to have clene soules and they maked harde wittes to hir children; the goodliche and vertuouse arn sowen of wemmelees sires. It is the cause why we lete blessen oure beddes, as th' abbot of Marmoustiers dide with this oon. Have ye nat y-broke lawes of holy chirche?"

"No," seyde she tighte, "I was assoiled bifore masse and, sith, ne have nat doon the leste sinne."

"Ye be right parfit," creyde the sleighe heigh-styward, "and delyted am I to han yow to wyve; but I have sworen blakke othes as an hethen."

"O! why is it?"

"Bi-cause the dauncinge nat ended and I ne mighte nat yow have to my-self, to bringe yow hider and kisse you."

With this worde, he took hir hondes curteisly, acoyede hem faste and dide hir goodly halve-wordes and countenaunces that maked hir al esy and happy. Thanne, as that she wery

wery was for dauncinge and alle the ceremonies, she leye hir adoun, seyinge:

"To-morwe, wol I loke wel that ye sinne nat."

And she lafte hir olde man faste wonderen on hir fayre beautee and gentilesse; unnethes wiste he whether to lete hir continue hir childewit, or elles to tellen hir why oxen chewe the code. Be it so he no-thing goode forn-caste, yet brende he of swich fyre at Blaunches worshipfulle graces by hir innocent and lythe slomeringe, he caughte corage to kepe and were this brighte jewel. With teres in his eyen, he kiste hir goodly sonnish heer, hir shaply eyeliddes, hir rede and fresshe mouth, and that right softly lest she awoke. And this was al his guerdoun, a domb gladnesse that brende his herte ay the more though it nat movede Blaunche. So the pore man biwayled the snowes of his sere elde and saugh wel how god hadde maked game in yevinge him notes to crakke whan he no lenger hadde teeth.

HOW THE SENESCHAL WERREYDE WITH A MOST GOODLY FLOUR

By the firste dayes, the seneschal ladde his wyf with blinde tales and bi-japed hir moste preysworthy innocence. At erst, fond he as in his office of justyse, excusinges for to leve hir ofte by hir-self. Thanne, he occupied hir with visytinges on londe, broughte hir to vendáges

in

in his vynes at Vouvray and, atte laste, he served hir of nyfles and fables o thousand. Whylom, he gan seye that lordes nought baren hem as lowe folk; that erles children nere sowen but in certeyne hevenisshe conjunccioun calculed with lernede astrologiens; whylom, that a man sholde stinte to bi-geten on haly-dayes for it was a greet travayl, and he heeld festes as he wilned to paradys-wardes with-oute threp. Now, he seyde that if, by hap eldres were nat in estaat of grace, children wrought on the day of Seynte Clara were blinde; of Seynt Genu, hadde the goute, of Seynt Aignan, the scabbe, of Seynt Roch, the pestilence; thanne eft, that tho that born were in Februare hadde alwey colde; in March, were to restlees; in Aprille, were naught, and that fetys knave children were sprongen in May. At o worde, he wilned that his were hool in al and hadde heer of two coloures; and, for this, nede were that alle covenáble condiciouns be fulfild. Outherwhyl, he tolde Blaunche that mannes right was to bi-geten a child up-on his wyf of his sole auctoritee, and, if hir liste ben a vertuous womman, she sholde ben hòòl at his wille; and, atte laste, he seyde they oughte abyde Lady Azay for that she were by the child-birthe. By al this, Blaunche wende hir instaunces were unqueme and, peraventúre, the seneschal, a man of age and appertised, was hir wyser. Wher-fore, stoupinge hir, she thoughte na mo, nat but with-inne hir-self, of

this longed-for child; this is to seye, she thoughte day and night as doon wommen that have a thing in minde, ne wiste she nat that she ferde as a baude renninge after the deyntee. Upon an eve, Bruyn fil in speche of children, a purpos he was wont to voyde as cattes doon water; but he was pleyninge of a wight dampned by him that morweninge as for greet harlotrye, seyinge that thilke, it nas no doute, sprang of eldres laden of dedly sinnes:

"By god!" seyde Blaunche, "as yow lyketh me yeve oon, nay but ye ben unshriven, I shal it thrasshe so sore, ye shulle be plesed with it."

Thanne, saugh this erl that his wyf was biten of an hoot desyr and that tyme it were he toke stryf ayeins hir maydenhode so for to thrallen it, quelle, daunte, yoke; or lulle it and quenche.

"What, lefe myn, wole ye ben a moder?" quod he. "But ye ne connen nat yet swich lady craft and ne be nat wont to holde and reule this hous."

"So, for to ben a verray countesse," seyde she, "and bere in my sydes a litel erl, moste I pleye the lady? Than so wol I doon and mochel what."

Blaunche, thanne, for winninge of linage, yaf hir to huntinge at the hert and the hinde, lepinge over diches, rydinge al day up-on hir hakenay by dale and doune, taking delyt in fleyinge hir haukes, unhodinge hem and caryinge on hir fetys hond. This was as the seneschal had wold. But, by this mene,

Blaunche

Blaunche wan an appetyt lyk as a nonne or a prelat, this is to seye, hir lust was to breden. Thus she sharped hir strengthes and ne staunched hir hunger but lyte whan, as she com hoom, she whette hir teeth at meles. And she, by redinge legendes writen here and ther, and cutting awey with hir dedliche arwes th' erly loves of briddes and of bestes, gan maken hir a mistihede of naturel alkemye that coloured hir viságe and stered hir fostringe spirites. This tamed but lyte, nay, it egged, hir werreyinge entente which that lough, longed and frisked ay the mo. The seneschal hadde wend, in lettinge his wyf disporte in feeldes, to bete doun hir rebel virginitee; but his fraude ferde amis, for the wanwit love that ran in hir veynes throf the more of thise assautes, callinge for justes and tourneyinges as doth a newe dubbed knight. The gode heigh-styward knew, thanne, that he hadde miswent and that ther nas no delitable spot on a gredle. For sothe, he niste after this, what fode he mighte yeve un-to swich able and lusty vertu, for, the more he hir weried, the more she rebelled. By this fighte, ther moste be, nedes, oon overcomen and oon wounded, ye, with a two-fold feendly scar he hoped to godde his foreheed were of spared for swiche yeres as he sholde live. The povre seneschal unnethes mighte folowe his wyf at huntinges for fere to ben unhorsed. He swatte and puffed under his harneys and his lyf was drawinge to an end ther wher-as

his

his wel-bigoon stywardesse conforted hires and caughte joye. Ofte sythe at even, she wolde gon on daunce, and the gode man, wrapped aboute in his thikke clothes was al crampisshed with thise exercitaciouns in whiche he nedes moste take part. His office it was to take hir hond whan she dauncede the sarsinesshe wagginges, and to bere the light whan hir liste lede the torche dauncinges; and, nat for his akes, sticches and elf-shottes, he wolde yet smylen and hir seye som gentil and hertely thing after alle hir turninges, merie games and newe daunces, for he lovede hir so woodly that, hadde she axed of him an olifaunt, he wolde have gon fecche it anoon.

Nathelees, up-on a day, he wiste that his lendes no-thing ne mighten with his wyves fresshe nature, and, makinge vertu of necessitee, he chees him to lete hir brydel go, trustinge som what in hir devocioun and sham-fastnesse; but algate sleep he nat but with an yë, for this he knew that god maked partriches for to be broched and rosted and maydenhodes for to be raft. Up-on a weet morwe, by swich weder as snayles trace forth, a sad weder able to dremes, Blaunche was at hoom, sete in hir chayer and rapt in a studie. Cause why? Lo, mo wonder assensiouns of lyfly spirites no thing ne never wroughte (and more darting, thurgh-darting, thurghout-darting and egre medecine, specifik or philtre is ther noon), than the sotil hete a-twixen the tow of a chayer and

that

that oon of a mayde sete by som tyme. And thus, she niste why, the countesse was destourbed of hir maydenhede that clouded hir brayn and gnow hir al aboute. Thanne, longed the gode man, sore anoyed ther-of, to dryven a-wey thoughtes that mighte bi-come springers of wedlees love.

"Why make ye thus hevy chere, lefe myn?" quod he.

"For shame."

"What al may yow offende?"

"Lo! ich am nought a rightful wyf for-why I ne have no child. Is it a dame with-out progenie? Nay. See, ech of my neigheboures hath children and ich am wedded for to comen ther-by, as ye be for to winne hem on me. The lordes of Toureyne have alle a greet plentee and hir wyves beren of hem pottes fulle: ye allone ben heireles. Men wol scorne us, ye! Wher wol bi-come your name, and youre londes and lordshipes? A child is his moder companion as by kinde, whos pley it is to cloute it, up-winde, graythe, clothe, despoilen, acoye, rokke, lulle, dressen and leye to slepe. And wel I fele, hadde I nat but halvendel oon, I wolde it kisse, wasshe, up-wrappe, nake and doon loppen and laughen al day longe as ladyes wone is."

"Nere but that, in bringinge hem forth, wommen deyen, and but ye be yet to lene and al to cloos, ye were by this tyme a moder..." answerde the seneschal, daswed by thilke streme

streme of wordes, " But wole ye bye oon al redy born? It ne shal yow coste nouther travayl ne peyne."

" Nay," quod she, " I wil y-like the travayle and the peyne, elles not wolde it ben oure. I woot wel it mot comen forth of me, sithen in chirche, men seyth how Jesus y-boren was of the mayde."

" Thanne preye we god," quod he, " so mote it be, and calle we to the vergene of Esgrignolles. Wyves, manye oon, han conceyved after a nyne dayes exercyse: ye sholden nat leve to doon oon."

Tho, the same day, Blaunche out-rood towardes oure lady of Esgrignolles arayed as a quene, rydinge up-on hir fyne hakenay. She werede on a robe of grene veluëttes with sotil gold lace lacinge, cutted un-to the brestes, havinge escarlat sleves, smale barres, an heigh hood set ful of riche stones and a gilded girdel that shewed hir girdelstede smal as a wand; the whiche aray she bi-highte til oure lady the vergene and, namely, as for the day of hir chirching. Sir Walter Montsoreau yede biforn, quik of yë as a sperhauk, swepinge the wey and takinge hede with his hors-men to the saufetee of the viáge. Neigh Marmoustiers, the seneschal, napping for hete for it was in August, nodded on his dextrer as it were a diademe on a cow heed. Wher-fore a contree wyf, seeinge so perte and gentil lady by swich old a felaw, this wyf which rouked by a tree

and

and drank of hir crokke, axed at a toothlees, wo-makinge crone that glened heer and there, whe'r this princesse were goinge for to drenchen old Deeth:

"Do wey," quod she, "it is oure lady of the Roche-Corbon, the heigh-stywardesse of Poytou and Toureyne, and she seeketh a child."

"A! ha!" lough the yonge wenche as it were a loosed flye. Thanne, shewinge the welbigoon knight that ladde the route:

"Yif he go tuppe hir, she wol sauve the waxen tapers and th' offringe."

"How, my dere," answerde ayein this old viritrate, "ik am a-mased she seke oure lady of Esgrignolles, for the preestes ben nat comliche. She mighte wel abyde a throwe in shade by the belle-tour of Marmoustiers, she sholde be sone with childe, so quikke ben the gode faderes."

"Ye! baw for religious folk," seyde a plowmannes wyf, a-wakinge. "Wite ye what? The knight of Montsoreau is lusty and deliver y-nough, he may opne this lady herte in so muchel the more as it is al redy cloven."

And alle gunne laughen. Sir Walter hadde minde to gon hem an-hange til a wey-syde elm for hir mis-wordes; but Blaunche cryde out faste:

"Beau sire, forbere yet a whyle; they ne have nat seyd al, and we shullen see by oure weye hoom."

Ther-with, she wex al rosy hewed and Sir Montsoreau

Montsoreau gan right inwardly bi-holden hir as for to darten forth the gledy stremes of love.

But the unclosing of hir witte was al redy bigonne thurgh the sawes of the forseide cherles that gunne fructifyen in hir minde. Thilke maydenheed was lyk as tinder, and neded but o word to sette it a-fyre.

And now, espyed Blaunche notáble and bodely difference bitwixe hir olde housbondes thewes and the perfeccioun of this ilke Walter, a doghty swain that, nat to mochel brosten with his twenty-three yeer of age and streight as a shaft in his sadel, was wyde awaked as first belle of morwe-song whan, al the revers, the seneschal was aslepe, and eek manly and mighty ther his mayster was doun-cast. A greet and squar wight he was, swich as wenches take on gladlier than a volupeer, for no fleen come ther-by. Somme ther be whiche wolde chyde hem. But ye ne sholde caste stones on no wight, for ech hath libertee to slepe as him list.

Avysed was al by the heighe-stywardesse so depe and royally wel that, by that they comen to the brigge of Tours, she lovede Walter inly and covertly as doth a mayde, unwist hir-selve what love amounteth. Anon, she bi-com a gentil womman, this is to mene she caughte desyr to hir neigheboures good, to that is best in man. She fil in love-syknesse, sinkinge as swythe to the depthe of wreechednesse sithen that

that al is fyr as fro the firste coveytise to the laste bétinge. And thus lerned she how, thurgh-out the eyen may glyde a sotil spirit causinge to swich greet fumositee in veynes of the body, foldes of the herte, nerves of the limmes, rotes of the heres, swetinges of the substaunce, celles of the brayn, straytes of the skinne, windinges of the chiterlings, pypes of the biles, and outhere whiche, with hir, were sodeynly sprad, skorkled, tikled, envenymed, cracched, reysed and maked to winse as though baskettes o thousand fulle of nedles were in-with hir. It was a mayden longing, a wel-biseye longing that blered hir eyen so that she bi-heeld no lenger hir olde housbonde but only yong Walter whos nature was mochel, as abbotes glorious dew-lappe. Whan the gode man yede in to Tours, the "A! Ha!" of the prees of folk awaked him; and he com in greet pryde with his meinee to the chirche of oure lady of Esgrignolles, hight of tyme yore: *La greigneur,* "the gretteste," as who seyeth: "She that is the moste worthy of merite." Blaunche paced in the chapelle wher children were axed at god and the vergene. Alloon was she ther as was usaunce, nay but biforn the seneschal, his squyeres and the folk lookinge up-on, whiche that stode the barres with-oute. Whan the countesse saugh the preest that hadde office to seye masses for getinge of children and to wryte doun avowes of offringes, she axed him whether ther were manye

manye bareyne wommen. Wher-to the gode preest answerde ayein and seyde, he nought hadde to compleyne on; children broughten inne good rente to chirche.

"And mete ye ofte sythes," quod Blaunche, "with yonge wyves that han olde housbondes as is my lord?"

"Selden," quod he.

"Lo, have they evere geten linage?"

"Alwey," seyde the preest, smylinge.

"And what of tho that have lasse olde makes?"

"Som-tymes."

"O, oh!" quod she, "is ther than more lykelinesse with swich oon as the seneschal?"

"Ye, wisly," seyde the preest.

"As how?" quod she.

"Ma dame," answerde the preest with sobre chere, "bifore this age, god al only intermedleth; thanne, after, men doth."

By thilke dayes, sooth was that wit and wisdom nas founde but only among clerkes. Thanne, maked Blaunche hir promise which was ful rich, in-so-muche as hir jeweles were worth wel two thousand sheeldes of gold.

"Ye semeth right joyous," seyde the seneschal whan, on the wey hoom, she dide trippe, daunce and snorte hir hakenay.

"O, ye!" quod she, "I dar be bounde but I gete a child, sith somme shulle wercche ther-to, as the preest tolde me; I wol electe Walter."

The seneschal, first, mente to gon slee the preest;

preest; but he thoughte swich cryme wolde coste him to dere; so shoop he for to ben wroken subtilly with helpinge of the erche-bisshop. Thanne, er he eft saugh the watles of the Roche-Corbon, bad he sir Montsoreau gon finden a shadwe in his owene contree, the whiche yong Walter dide; he wiste how his mayster wroughte up-on wraththe. In stede of this ilke Walter, the seneschal took to his servyse the sone of sir Jallanges whos feef de-pended of the Roche-Corbon. He was a youngling y-clept Renee, neigh fourteen yeer of age. Bruyn chees him as page til that this child were of elde to ben a squyer; and he sette over his men an old crepul with whom he hadde goon wyde aboute in Palestyne and elles where.

Thus, wende the gode man he sholde nat bere no branched cokewoldes hornes upon his heed and mighte yet sadle, brydle and holden inne his wyves rebel maydenheed that kikked as mule caught in his trays.

THAT WHICH NAS BUT VENIAL SINNE

THE Sonday after the coming of Renee to the Roche-Corbon, Blaunche wente on the hunte with-oute hir gode man; and, in forest neigh Carneaux, she saugh a monk; hir semed, he pressed a mayde faster than nede were. And she sette spores, cryeinge to hir gomes:

"Ho! ho! hold him that he nat kille hir!"

But nat so sone nas the heigh-stywardesse y-come

y-come uppe that she ne hastily plighte hir hors aboute, and the sighte of that the monk bar letted hir to dryve forth the hunting. In-to a studie she fil by the weye hoom and the derke lanterne of hir wit opened and receyved a shyninge light that clered rideles a thousand, as chirche peintures or outhre, gestes and layes of minstrales or bisinesse of briddes. Sodeynly, she discovered the brighte lore of love writen on alle langages, eek yet on that oon of carpes. For sothe, is it nat folye t' assaye for to hyden this science fro maydenes? Erly wente Blaunche to bedde and erly she seyde to the seneschal:

"Bruyn, ye have me bidaffed and ye oughte swinke as swonk the monk of Carneaux with the mayde."

Old Bruyn mis-douted him that his mescheef were uppe. He loked on Blaunche so kene, his fyry ernest mighte nat ben amiddewardes and answerde lythe ayein:

"Lo, herte myn, as I yow took to wyve, I hadde more love than might. I triste on your misericorde and vertu. This disese temeth me on bere and shal sone make you free. So longe abyde til I deye from you; it is only the requeste that yow axeth he which that is your mayster and may comaunde, yet wilneth be not but your firste ministre and lowly subgit. As bitraye nat the worship of myn hoor heed. In swich a nede, ther hath been lordes have slawen hir wyves."

"What?

"What? wolde ye doon me dye?" quod she.

"Nay," answerde he ayein, "I love thee over-mochel, swete! Ye, thou art the blosme of myn age, my hap and welfare. My righte doughter art thou. The sighte of thee gladeth myne eyen, and, for thy sake, I may bere aught, be it joye or sorwe. I yeve thee leve of al, so that thou grucche nat over-muche of povre Bruyn that maked of thee an heigh lady, riche and worshipped. Ne shalt thou nat ben a fair widewe? Lo, thyn hap shal ese my deyinge."

And he fond yet a tere in his dreyde eyen; it trikled al hoot on his falwe cheke and fil on the honde of Blaunche which that sory, as she saugh the grete love of this olde housbonde that wolde leye him-selve in grave but to plese hir, seyde laughinge:

"Baw! Wepe nat. I wol abyde."

Ther-with-al, the seneschal kiste hir hondes and served hir with litel pigeounes fare, seyinge on deep ernest:

"But and thou wiste, goode myn, how in thy sleep I acoyede thee, swete, now heer, now there."

And th' olde ape clawed hir with bothe his hondes that were al skinne and bones.

"And," seyde he stille ther-after, "I dorste nat waken this cat but she mighte stranglen myn honour, so as, at this craft of love, I ne sette but myn herte a-fyre."

"A!" seyde she eft, "ye may streyne me in

armes. I do no fors ther-of, yet whan myne eyen ben opne."

With that worde, the pore seneschal, cacching forth the smale daggere from a table ther-by, raughte it hir, seyinge with rage:

"Dereling! Do and slee me or lat bileve thou lovest me a lyte."

"Yis, yis," seyde she al agast, "I mene to love you mochel."

And so bifel, this yonge maydenheed turned up-on the olde man and heeld him lowe; and, for thilke falwe Venus feeldes sake, Blaunche, of the malis of womman-kinde, maad wende aboute hir olde housbonde as milleres mule:

"Goode Bruyn, I wilne this; nay, that! com Bruyn, Bruyn!"

Ther nas but "Bruyn!" at every word. So that Bruyn sorer stikked was with his wyves clemence than he nere with hir shrewednesse. She twiste his brayn, wilning were al fyr-reed; and, with the leeste moeving of hir browes, she angred him so wood, he smoot every thing adoun; and whan she was sorweful, the wofulle heigh-styward on his sete of justyse, gan shoute ever in oon: "Hang him!"

Any other hadde ben deed as a gnat after swiche mayden bataylles; but so lyk steel was Bruyn, he was hard to overcomen. Up-on an eve, as Blaunche hadde set every thing up-so-doun, brosten bestes and folk and desespeired with hir wrawe coráge th' ever-lastinge fader

which

which hath tresoures of pacience, sith he tholeth us, she seyde, as she wente to bedde:

"My goode Bruyn, I have a-lowe fantasyes that me byte and whette and, thanne, go to myn herte, sette my braynes a-fyre and egge me to wikke thinges, and, by night, I dreme of the monk of Carneaux..."

"Lefe myn," answerde the seneschal ayein, "thise be fondinges and temptaciouns of the devel, swiche as they connen withstonde, freres and nonnes. Lo thanne, and ye wole doon your soules cure, go shewe your shrift to the worthy abbot of Marmoustiers. He shal rede yow for the beste and sette yow in-to rightwisnesse."

"Yet to-morn wol I thider," quod she.

And al so sone as day was, she gan hye un-to the gode monkes, whiche that, wondringe to seen in hir covent so bright a lady, diden sinnes mo than oon that evening; and, for the nones, they ledde hir in hye fether un-to hir reverent abbot. Blaunche fond him in a grove by a rokke under a shaded arche, and she maked a merveyle of his holy chere al-though she nere nat wont to have over mochel respect to whyte heres.

"God yeve yow good lyf, ma dame!" quod he. "What come ye seke so neigh deeth, ye that ye be so yong?"

"Your precious avys," quod she, bowing with hir curteisye. "And so plese you gye an unmeke

unmeke sinner, I were fayn to have so wys a confessour."

"Childe," answerde the monk with whom old Bruyn hadde knit up this knakke, "and but I ne hadde the colde of an hundred winter on this pyled heved, I ne mighte nat herkne to your shrifte, but sey on, and, if ye fare to paradys, that were gladly thorough me."

Ther-with-al, the heighe stywardesse shadde the trufles up-on hir conscience and, purged of smale giltes, drough forth un-to the after-math of hir confession.

"A! fader," quod she, "I mot telle yow, a desyr eyleth at me day by day for to geten a child. Is this wrong?"

"Nay," quod the abbot.

"But," seyde she eft, "myn housbonde is unmighty by kinde to kerve the clooth poverté is maad of, as olde wommen seye by the wey-syde."

"Thanne," quod the preest, "oughte yow live al clene and lete noon swich thought ben hanginge in your herte."

"But I have herd lady Jallanges tellen, it nere no sinne, so men ne caughte neyther profit ne delyt."

"Delyt ther is alwey ther-inne," seyde the abbot, "and ne weneth ye nat that a child, it be a gayn? But festneth in your thoughte that it shal ben a dedly sinne to god-ward and a cryme as to men if a womman graffe in hir-self an imp with felaweshipe of a man she ne be

be with rightfully wedded. Wher-fore, any that sette holy lawes on sixe and sevene shal cacche grete harmes in next worlde and be put to be subget to grille feendes with sharpe and bytinge clucches; and she shal roste in flaumende fyres bi-cause, heer, she warmede hir herte som-what more than she sholde." Ther-with-al, Blaunche clawed hir ere, mused a lyte and seyde:

"Tel me, how so dide the vergene Marie?"

"Ho!" answerde the preest, "this is a mistihede."

"What may that word be to mene?"

"A thing men cannot telle the why, and that we ben holden for to bileve with-oute at-do."

"And, say," quod she, "mighte I nat bringe forth a mistihede?"

"This oon," seyde th' abbot, "nis bitid but ones; it was for the sone of godde."

"Goode fader! Goddes wille is it that I swelte? or that, as I have been wys and sound of understonding, I falle in som folye? Here-of lyth greet peril, in-so-muche as thinges crepe in me and waxen hòòt. I nam namore in my righte wit and do no fors of no-thing. I wolde skippe over walle, renne shamlees thurgh feelde and caste al to grounde, mighte I but see that brente so hote with the monk of Carneaux. And the whyles that swiche rages beten in on me and stingen aboute body and soule, I take no hede of god, develes or housbonde. I stampe and renne up and down. I wolde

bresten lavour, pot-house, austriche yerd, pultrye, houses of office and al. So waxe I wood, I woot nat how to telle it. I dar nat yow knowleche alle my mescheves. For-why? I have it so hote whan I speke ther-of; and this desyr, so god it warie, renneth up-on me now wel y-nough. But how if folye cacche me, stekke me and quelle my vertu? How thanne? God that hath bred this grete love, shal he dampne me?"

And with this worde, the preest it was that clew his ere, al a-whaped with the wayment-inges, arguinges, wit and wisdom a mayden-heed compasseth.

"Childe," quod he, "god hath us shed fro dombe bestes and shapen a paradys which it lyth in oure might to winnen; and for-thy, he sente us understonding to ben a rother that stere us ayeins the tempest of overthrowinge lustes. Ther is a manner how to pyne your engyn in your brayn with fasting, over-greet travayl and othre wyse thing; and, in stede to startle and winse as a loos dormows, wel ought yow preye til Oure Lafdy, slepe in the bare flore, governe your hous and eschewen ydelnesse."

"A! fader, whan ich am sete in chirche, I ne see preest ne auter, but only the child Jesus that me maketh longe for the tother thing. But answere ye to me: what if myn heed go al miswey, if I worthe to wood and falle in laas of love?"

"If

"If it so were," seyde th' unwys preest, "thanne, sholde ye ben in the cas of seynte Lidora, which that, on a hoot someres day, faste asleep with legges leyd heer and there and clad lighte, was approched by a young man fulfild of falshede; and he, coy-foot, gat on hir a child. But, in-so-muche as thilke seynte no-thing ne wiste of swich gyle and mazed to be delivered, weninge that the swelling of hir purs it were a sore syknesse, she nat dide penaunce but as for a venial sinne; for no deyntee nadde she felt of this stelthe, as the lither cherl him-self confessed, seyinge on the gebet ther he was to-hanged that the seynte hadde stered never a del."

"O! fader," quod she, "trusteth wel, I nil stere no-thing more."

With that, she slit awey lightsom and lythe, smylinge and castinge hir wit aboute how she mighte doon a venial sinne. Whan she was repeired fro the grete covent, thanne saugh she in the castel yerde litel Jallanges rydinge at the ordinaunce of th' olde squyer; he torned and wente on his stede, plyinge him-self un-to the moevinges of thilke, prikking up and doun with his wentes and turninges, right goodly; sittinge heighe on horse, so fresh, so yong, so weldy, tonge ne may it telle. He sholde have doon envye to quene Lucresse that rafte hir-self hir lyf for she was bi-smotered ayeins hir wil.

"Ah!" seyde Blaunche with-inne hir-self, "were

" were this page nat but fiftene yeer of age, I wolde fayn slepe faste by him."

For which, maugree the to greet youthe of this gentil page, she loked ententifly at diner and soper on Renees blake lokkes and fair skinne and wondred on his semelihede, on his eyen namely that welles were of cleer shyninge light and of a greet hete of lyf he was afered to casten, dere child!

Now, on an even, as the heigh-stywardesse was musinge in hir chayer, old Bruyn axed hir what mighte be the cause why.

" I trowe," quod she, " that ye have doon mochel travayle in armes er-dayes, ye ben so forswonken."

" O! " answerde he ayein, smilinge as they doon, olde men whan they ben up-on hir amorouse remembraunces, " at thrittene yeer and half, I gat a child on my modres chamberere."

Blaunche, nat axinge of namore, gessed the page Renee was lyk to be suffisaunt and took greet confort. She dide daliaunce to th' olde wight and rouled aboute in hir dombe desyr as a cake that gadereth flour.

HOW AND WITH WHOM WAS MAAD THE FORSEIDE CHILD

THE heigh-stywardesse ne dremd hir nought longe how for t' awaken by and by the pages love, and she fond out swythe the natural snare with

with which arn caught up the doughtieste. Thus she it leyde: in the hoteste of the day, the gode man wente to reste after the sarsinesshe gyse, as was his wone sith he ferde from holy lond. During this space, Blaunche was by hirselve in feeld or wroughte at swich nedlewerke as wommen embroude or purfile; and, ofte sythe, she abood in halle and saugh to the clothes, leyde up the shetes or ran abouten as hir liste. Now thanne, apoynted she this stille houre til acheving of the pages educacioun in settinge him to rede on bokes and bidde his preyeres. So, by the morwe at none tyde as the dede sleep fil on the seneschal, y-hevied with the hote sonne that skorkleth with his brighteste bemes the hil of the Roche-Corbon, so muche that nedes it moste be to slombren, but if a wenche be blowen aboute, myned, newe prikked by a feendly virginitee . . . , Blaunche, thanne, perched hir right gentilly in hir gode mannes lordly heigh chayer, which she ne fond nat to hye why she rekned on aventures of prospective. The sleighe byrde sat fetisly as a swalwe on neste and bente hir mery heed on hir arm as a child asleep, but in castinge hir purveyaunces, she opened joly eyen that smyled and twinklede biforn on the derne and queinte geres, fnesinges, bagginge lokes and longinges of him that was aboute to lye at hir feet, no ferre aweye than an old flee mighte hoppe. And, for sothe, she drow up so neigh the veluët tapite ther sholde sitte on knees the sely child whos

whos soule and lyf she hasarded so wantounly that, al hadde he been a stoon seynt, his yë moste nedes folwe the foldes of the garnement by cause of biholdinge and wondring on the perfecciouns and beautee of the fyn leg shewed by the whyte hose of the heigh-stywardesse. No wonder was though a wayk knave sholde be caught in a trappe wher-as the hardieste knight were gladly fallen. Whan she hadde torned to right and lafte, moeved aboute, shift hir body and founden out the place ther best lay the lure, she cryed out softe: "Oh! Renee!" ... Renee that was in halle as she wiste, sterte in and shewed his broun heed bitwixe the dore-curteins.

"Your wille, my lady?" seyde the page.

He was of-holdinge, of greet reverence, his cappe of scarlet-reed veluët, lasse reed yet than his goodly chekes, dimplede and right fresshe.

"Come hider," seyde she in hir smal voys; this child so drow hir and took up, hir herte quaked.

Sooth is, no preciouse stones nere so brighte, ne book-fel whytter than his hewe, ne womman so goodly of shape. How fairer, lo, and comlier he seemed now, she was thus neigh to hir desyring. And beth ye siker, the joly pley of love shon brighte with al this youthe, goode sonne, stillenesse, and al.

"As rede me the litanies of oure lady the vergene," seyde she, reching him an open book on hir preying-stole, "that I knowe whe'r ye be wel

wel scolered with your mayster. Thenketh yow nat the vergene bright?" axed she smylinge whan he heeld th' enlumined houres that shinen of asure and gold.

"It is a portreyture," answerde he, shamfaste, castinge his yë a lyte on his so gracious maystresse.

"Rede, do rede!"

Ther-with, he gan in bisinesse, Renee, to rehercen thise moste swete and aungellyke litanies; but, trowe ye, the *ora pro nobis!* of Blaunche wenten ay wayker and wayker lyk sounes of a horn on londe; and, as the page redde on, utterly loude: "O! misteriouse rose," the chasteleyne that herde well, answerde with a lyte syk. And now, Renee wiste that Blaunche, she was asleep. So, he began wayten hir, castinge on hir alle the bemes of his sighte. Ne noon other song roughte he thanne to singe, save a lay of love; for gladnesse, his herte leped and up-sterte in-to his throte, so that the lasse brenninge of bothe thise joly maydens niste whether that it was, and, hadde ye hem seen, never nolde ye bringe swich an other couple in-fere. Renee fested him by the eyen and gan casten of fruytes o thousand rypened of this semely flour, and, in this blisse, he leet falle the book, wher-of he wex folish as monk caught in lecherie; but eek, ther-by, he wiste how that Blaunche slomrede faire and faste, for she nat stered; and the wyly thing wolde nat have opened hir

yën

yën to yet grettere perils: she triste that outher thing sholde falle bisyde the book of houres. Lo! biholde, ther nis no wors fantasye than that oon to gete child. Now, the page was fayn to seen his lady foot that was shod streyte in a deyntee shoo of pers colour. She hadde it bistowed singulerly on a foot-stole, for she was sete to heigh in hir lordes chayer. This ilke foot was smal in compassing, bent somwhat, about a two fingres brood, long as an hegge-sparwe (in-taken the tayl) and narwe at ende: a delicat, mayden foot, as worthy of a kisse as theef of a rope; a fairye foot deyntevous, able to dampne an archaungel; a spekinge foot, impish and wantoun, that yeveth a man desyr to refiguren right swich even-lyk a peyre for to kepe forth in this worlde oon of the lovely werkes of godde. Fonded was the page to unshoon this inviting foot. With this purpos, the bemes of his eyen lighted of al the fyr of his age, swongen up and doun as a belle-clapper fro winsom foot to slepinge face of his lady and maystresse, herkninge hir sleep, takinge in hir breeth; and, for the nones, he niste nat whether were swetter to kisse, the fresshe and rody lippes of the heighe-stywardesse or this spekinge foot. Eft-sone, of reverence, fere or, it mighte be, of verray love, he maked eleccioun of the foot and kiste hit cloos as a mayde that nat dorste. Thanne, as swythe, caughte he ayein the book, feling his hewe wexen yet redder, and, al yerne for gladnesse,

nesse, he gan cryen out clere: "*Janua coeli*" —yate of hevene— . . . But Blaunche ne brak nat hir sleep, trowinge that the page wolde stye fro foot to knee and, so forth, to hevene. She wex in sore despyt whan litanies endede withoute skathe, and Renee, which wende he hadde over-mochel hap as for oon day, issed out of halle, al perturbed, richer of thilke hardy kis than oon that pikked hath the pore-box.

The heigh-stywardesse, by hir-self, gan bithinke how the page mighte wel tarien by the weye if he were aboute to singe *magnificat* at morwe-song. So, for next day, she forn-caste to up-reyse hir foot a litel wight and kythe the nose of that that they clepen "parfit beautee" in Toureyne bicause it is never defaced theroute and abideth ever fresh. Juggeth if the page, al eschaufed with the conceits of the day biforn and rosted of his desyr, longed for the tyme to rede in the love-book. He was called up and wente eft thurgh the forme of the litanie, and Blaunche spared nat for to slepe. Thanne, thilke Renee leyde hond to the faire leg and bolded to fele whether the burned knee or ought elles were of samit. The povre child, holdinge his desyr inne for fere ne dorste do but shorte devociouns and lighte strokes, and, al kiste he, yet softly, this goodly clooth, he heeld him coy; the whiche, as she gessed with hir soules feling and hir hertes understonding, the heigh-stywardesse that dide al hir peyne for nat to stere, him cryeth:

"How

" How now, Renee, ich am on slepe ! "

Heringe that he thoughte was a soor repreve, the page, adrad, fledde, leving bihynde bokes, bisinesse and al. Ther-with, the heigh-stywardesse added this preyere to the litanies :

" Holy vergene, how harde ben children for to make? "

At soper, the page swatte adoun his bak as he com serve his lady and lord. But he was mazed when Blaunche caughte him th' alder-moste wantoun wink that womman ever caste; and right lovely and mighty it was, for it wroughte this child to hardy man. And, on the same evening, whan Bruyn was at sessiouns, the page wayted and fond Blaunche asleep, and maked hir for to mete a blisful sweven. He rafte hir that so sore misesed hir and so freely put to hir of sede to children that, with the superfluitee, she mighte have geten tweyne. And thanne, the wyf, henting the page aboute the heed and clipping him cloos, creyede out :

" O ! Renee, thou hast me awaked ! "

For certeinly, at this pleye no slepe were able to laste; and they wenden bothe that seyntes sholde slepe with y-clenched festes. With that dede and with-oute no forther un-told wonder, thurgh a benigne propertee that fortune voucheth sauf un-to wedded men, the descente of the fetys and semely hornes sitting to cokewoldes fil on the gode housbondes heed; he feled no-thing ther-of.

After

After this brighte feste, the heigh-stywardesse wente al-hertely un-to hir mid-dayes restes in frensshe gyse, the whyles that Bruyn wente un-to his after the sarsinesshe fasoun. But, with thilke restes, she fond oute how bet was the pages lusty youthe than th' elde of olde seneschals; and by night, she buried hir in the shete fer from hir housbond which was sour and scalled, as hir thoughte. Thanne, what of slepinge and waking a-day, what of lyinge forth in restes and seyinge litanies, felede the heigh-stywardesse flouren in hir softe sydes that of-springe she so yerne syked after. But yet thanne, ran hir thought more on the dede than on the fruyt. And also thenk ye that Renee coude now rede, nat only on bokes but eek on his faire ladyshippes eyen, for whom he hadde blythely cast him-self in-to the fyr, if hir willes had been.

Whan that, bitwixe hem, hadde y-drawe been many a goodly and winsom foruh, ye, mo than an hundred, the litel stywardesse hadde care and thought for the soule and lyf of hir frend the page. Lo! up-on a reiny morwe, as they hadde pleyd lyk children bothe innocent from heed to fote, Blaunche, algate with child, him seyde:

"Com neer, Renee! Wostow that wher-as I have doon veniale sinnes, for I was asleep, thou hast doon deedliche many oon?"

"A! lady myn," quod he, "wher wol god caste

caste swiche of his soules as shullen be dampned, if that be sinne?"

Blaunche braste out to laughe and kiste him on the forheed.

"Hold thy tonge, nyce childe, for it is heven in balaunce and bihoveth that we bothe winne it if thou wole never dwelle fro me."

"Oh! I have myn heven here!"

"Never telle me," quod she, "ye ben a misbilever, a badde boy; and thou wost nat that that I love, it art thou."

"Thou nost that ich am goon with childe, and, with-inne a whyle, no more shal it hyde it-self than the cop of my nose. Lo, what wol the abbot seye? What wol my lord? What though he wexe wrooth? He mighte thee quelle. Me thenketh, childe, your beste is to faren un-to th' abbot of Marmoustiers, discure your sinnes and leve him purveye that dow doon by the seneschal."

"Ey!" seyde the sleighe page, "and I biwreye the secree of oure love, he wol leye ther-on a curs."

"As in this worlde," quod she, "he may wel, but thy blis her-afterward is dereworthy to me."

"Now, wole ye so, swete herte?" quod he.

"Ye," answerde she, som-what waykly.

"Thanne, wol I henne; but go slepe ye eft so that I bidde farewel."

And the gentil couple rehersed laste litanies

as

as though they bothe for-sawe how hir love sholde ende in his aprille.

Thanne, on the morwe, rather for to save his dere lady than for his owene sake, and also bi-cause of obeyinge, wente forth Renee Jallanges un-to the grete covent.

HOW OF THILKE SINNE OF LOVE WAS DOON SOOR PENAUNCE AND TAKEN DEEP MOORNING

"HOLY god!" shrighte the abbot whan the page y-told had hool the tale of his softe sinnes, "thou art th' abettour of an huge felonye and hast broken feyth with thy lord. Wostow, page of mescheef, that, for this thing thou shalt brenne by al eternitee... ever-more? And wostow what it is to lese heven for a deedly, slyding tyme in erthe? Woful thou! I see thee cast for ay in the put of helle; ne, but so be thou paye god, erst in this worlde that thou owest for thilke grete wrong."

Ther-with-al, this olde gode abbot that was of the flesshe seyntes ben of maked and welte greet auctoritee in londe of Tours, affrayed the yonge man with an hepe of enhortinges, cristene speches, hestes of holy chirche and othre wel-sounede thing a thousand, as manye as is able a feend to devyse in six waykes space for taking up a mayde. And finally, Renee, which was in the trewe mekenesse of innocence, bowed his herte to th' abbot.

Lo! this ilke, wilninge to maken an holy man vertuous

vertuous for ever of this childe up the poynt to bicome badde, enjoyned him he sholde, erst, gon doon obeisaunce to his lorde and shewe him his harlotryes; thanne, if he came sauf of this confessioun, to take the croys and gon forthright til holy lond, wher he sholde bleven un-to the ende of fiftene yeer and werreye with the hethene.

"Ey, holy fader," quod he al mased, "were it longe y-nough fiftene yeer to quyte me of so mòchel blis? Allas, but-if ye knewe it: the gladnesse I hadde, worth is yere a thousand."

"God wol ben a good felawe. Go!" seyde ayein th' olde abbot, "and do no more amis. Up that condicioun, *ego te absolvo,* I assoille thee." Ther-with-al, pore Renee wente ayein, repented utterly, to the castel of the Roche-Corbon; and the firste he mette with was the seneschal, in bisinesse to doon polisshe his harneys, testers, helmes, bracers and al his gere. He was seten on a greet marbul bench ther-oute, plesed to see his brighte wepnes that broughte him in minde his merie happes of holy londe, his doughty dede, the wenches, *et caetera.* As that Renee fil doun on knees biforn him, the gode lord wex astonied:

"What is this?" quod he.

"My lord," answerde ayein Renee, "so biddeth the wightes stonde a-weye."

And whan they goon were, the page tolde out his gilt, how he had assayled his lady slepinge, so that he sholde have, sure, geten on hir

hir a child, lyk the man with the seynte, and how he cam, at heste of his confessour, to putte him in the disposicioun of the offended housbonde. With thise wordes, Renee Jallanges leet his lovely eyen falle, whenne was sprongen al the mescheef; and he heeng his bare heed adoun, with fallinge armes, waytinge buxomly on his harde stounde and goddes wil. Nat so whyt was the seneschal that he ne mighte blenche yet more. And ther-fore, he paled as newe-bleched shete, spechelees for angre; thanne, this olde man, though that he not hadde in his veynes vital spirites ynowe for bi-getinge of a child, fond ayein in this hote ernest more vigour than nedeth to quellen a man. With his herd honde, he caughte forth his mighty mace of steel, reysed it, twighte and caste with swich ese, it semed a bal to pleye with bowles, and launched it on the pale forheed of thilke Renee which that, as knowinge he had doon his lord grevous mis, abood meke with forth out-straught nekke; he wende he sholde abye hool the gilt for his lady in this worlde and the nexte oon. But swich goodly yonghede and alle the kindely alurements of this welefulle cryme founde grace in the olde mannes herte, how so be Bruyn kepte a sterne chere. And thanne, throwinge his mace a-fer on a dogge whos brayns he out-quelled:

"Lat a thousand millioun clawes byte for ay the knukles of hir that bi-gat him that sowed th' oke of which was maad the chayer on which thou

thou puttest me the hornes! And as mochel to tho that bi-geten thee, cursed page of mescheef! Go ayein to the devel fro wham thou art y-spronge! henne! aweye fro me, the castel, the lond! Abyd nat an inche mo, elles I shal devyse thee a deeth by esy fyre, doinge thee curse twenty tyme a stounde thyn ugly baude..."

Up-on thise firste wordes of the seneschal, which was turned ayein to his owene youthe at regards of curses, the page fleigh, letinge him quyte of the remenaunt: he dide wel.

Bruyn, fired of fel rage, spedde him to gardin-warde faste as feet might gon, acorsinge alle, smitinge and ravinge; ye, he dasshed from a swaynes hondes three bacins of broke mete for the houndes; and so was he bistad with angre, he had nat knowen a comb from a mercer and had wel striken doun oon for outher. Eft-sones, he espyed his rather mayde-wyf, she was lokinge forth in covent rode, unwar that never mo sholde she see the page.

"Ah! ma dame, by the develes rede, treble fleshhook, am I a swolwer of japes and a babe to bileve ye han so greet an entree, a page may forth in go pace and yow nat awake? By the deeth! by myn heed! by the blood!"

"In good feyth," answerde she, which understood how the myne was y-blowen, "I feled it ful free, but sith ye never ne wissed me the thing, me thoughte I was dreminge."

The

The seneschalles grete ire malt as snow ayein sonne, for yet goddes wraththe hadde ben aslaked with a smylinge of Blaunche:

"O thousand millioun develes take this misbigeten child! I swere that..."

"No, no. Be nat so curst," quod she. "If so be it is nat youre, it is myn, and seyde ye nat, this ender-even, ye wolde love what came of me?"

And over al this, she rong him out swich a tale of arguinges, whyte wordes, pleintes, quereles, teres and othre womannisshe paternostres, as, first, that the demeines sholden nat ben escheted to the king, that never nas child more innocently cast in ingot, and this and that and muchel more; so that the gode cokewold softened; and Blaunche, whan she saugh hir tyme, seyde:

"Wher is the page?"

"He is goon to the devel."

"What! have ye sleen him?"

And, al pale, she gan to falteren.

Bruyn niste wher he sholde bi-come as he saugh wanen the blisse of his olde dayes and, for hertes ese of hir, fayn hadde he shewed the page; for which he bid him to hye: but Renee, for his lyf, was flowen. Al so sone as that Blaunche wiste of the forseyde ilke abbot the penitence y-leyd on hir chosen freend and how he was passed over see, she fil in mochel sorwe, ever seyinge:

" Wher is he, povre wight amidde periles for me?"

And she called after him among as doth a child that leveth his moder no reste til that his wilninge be graunted. With this wo-makinge, th' olde heigh-styward, felinge he was in the gilt, peyned him to doon thinges o thousand, lakkinge oon, for makinge Blaunche happy; but no-thing savoured so wel as the pages swetenesses.

How so it be, on a day, she bar the longed-for child.

And witeth wel, it was a goodly feste for the worthy cokewold, for the fader lyknesse y-grave was al-hoole on this fayre issue of love. Blaunche gladed and caughte ayein som-what of hir pleyinge chere and flour of innocence that mirthed the seneschalles olde houres. Day by day, as he saugh the litling rennen aboute, as he herde th' entre-chaunginge laughtre of moder and child, he gan to love him; and he were woxen wood with any that hadde seyd he nere nat the fader.

And for-as-muchel as the pages aventúre not was y-blowen with-oute the castel, word wente al Toureyne over that erl Bruyn yet hadde wher-with-al to geten a child. Untouched was the fame of Blaunche which that gessed, by the fifte-spirit of womman conning y-drawe fro the swete tonne in Jupiteres celer how it bihoved ne nought to seyen of the venial sinne under which hir child was covered. For-thy,

she

she bicom wys, war and was holden a vertuous persone. Thanne, knew she, with use, of hir gode mannes bountee; and though she lete him nat gon forther than hir chin weninge she were yolden to Renee, yet she pamprede him and kepte in joye in eschaunge of the floures of elde wher-with he awayted up-on hir, smyled up-on him, flateringe him softe as doon gode wyves by housbondes they bi-swyken, and al so kindely, the seneschal nolde nat deye, sat square in his chayer; and, ay the lenger he lived, the more he wan accustumance to lyf. Til, shortly, up-on an eve, he paste, nat knowinge a-right whider he yede; for he seyde to Blaunche:

"O! swete herte, I see thee nought: is it night-tyme?"

Swich was the laste ende of the rightwyse, and he deserved it wel for hyre of his harde dede in holy londe.

Blaunche of thilke deeth was sore bistad, weping up-on hir housbonde as a fader; she lived forth melancolious and lente noon ere to minstralcye of other marriage. Of which, rightwyse folk preysede hir; they wiste nat that she hadde an housbonde as in herte and a lyf as in hope. Yet was she tyme and tyme a widwe bothe in minde and dede. For, as the countesse no tydinges ne herde of the werreyour of the croys, she wende he were deed; and, ofte a-night, dreminge on him lorn, lyinge in ferren londe, she awook in teres.

Thus

Thus dwelled she by fourtene yeer in remembraunce of a swift tyde of joye.

Finally, up-on a day whan she hadde ladyes with hir in-fere to talen at after-soper, lo! hir litel sone that hadde the elde of wel thrittene yeer and half, and was as lyk un-to Renee as is able a child un-to his fader, havinge of Bruyn nat but the name... lo! him heer, this litel winsinge and gentil thing lyk his moder, comth sterting in fro the garden, al renninge, swettinge, puffinge, pantinge, clawinge al thing by the weye, as is of children, and renneth un-to his dere moder, falleth on hir lappe; thanne, brekinge the speches of everich oon, cryeth:

"O, moder, ich have yow for to telle what: ich have seyn in the court a palmer, and he clipped me right faste."

"What?" cryde the castelleyne, torninge toward a servaunt whos office was to folowen aboute the yonge erl and awayten his preciouse lyf, "ich have yow forbode that ye ne never sholden leve my sone in hondes of no straunger, were he yet the holieste man in erthe. I wol yeven yow acquitaunce."

"Allas! my lady," answerde this olde squyer, al abaved, "this oon ne wilned noon harm, for he weep as he kiste him harde."

"Hath he wopen?" quod she. "A! he is the fader."

Which, whan she hadde seyd, she lened hir heed

heed on hir chayer; it was that ilke oon, ye understondeth, ther she had sinned.

So wondrede the ladyes by this unskilful word, they sawe nat at pryme face that the povre heigh-stywardesse was deed. And never nas knowen whether that hir shorte ending were brought aboute by peyne that hir lover which, for kepinge of his avow, not hadde wold hir seen, or by verray joye of his hoom-cominge and by hope to doon reysen th' abbot of Marmoustiers ban. And it was a thing right woful; for the knight of Jallanges wente out of his wit up-on sighte of his lady leyd in grave and bi-com a monk at Marmoustiers which somme, in thilke tyme, called Maimoustier, as who sayth *majus monasterium,* the gretteste mynster; and for sothe it was oon the fayreste as in Fraunce.

THE SUCCUBUS

PROLOGE

SOMME men of Toureyne, the noble lond, esed in herte with the autoures hoot pursute of olde thinges, aventúres, heye dedes and tales of merthe of this blisfulle contree, weninge, certayn, that he coude al thing, axede (after drinkinge, I mene) whether he hadde founde the cause as by grammer, which alle ladyes of the toune wolde fayn knowen, why som strete of Tours y-clept was "hoot strete" (La rue Chaulde). Of him was answered, he wondrede y-nough how they hadde cast to forgetinge the covents, many oon, that stode in this ilke strete wher the yerne continence of freres and nonnes sholde have set walles brenninge so hote, somme ladyes of degree were goon with childe for they hadde romed ther-aboute a litel what to late on even-tyde. A gentil man, stroutinge as he a clerk were, seyde that, whylom, the stewes were alle in thilke place. Another wond him-self in the smale lerning of grammer and spak faire sawes no man understood,

proeving wordes, joyninge melodyes of old speche and newe, entermedling uságes, distilling verbes and subliming langages fro sin Noës flood. Thanne, devysed he of Ebrews, Chaldiens, Egypciens, Grekes, Romayns and of Turnus, which that foundede Tours; and, atte laste, seyde the goode man that "chauld" with-oute "h" and "l" is to mene after "cauda," and ther was som tayl to this storie; but the wyves nought understoden ther-of save the latere ende.

An old man tolde how there, yore agon, was a hoot welle-spring, of which dronken his grete graunt sires eldres; and lo! in lasse whyle than nedeth a flye for to colle his nexte, it was a poke-ful of wordes, olde and newe and hir linages, wher-in a sooth were lenger to finde than lous in drasty berd of a capucyn frere. But som lettred man, knowen for he hadde set his botes in dyverse covents, y-brent oille by nightertale, wasted fele volumes and assembled textes, indentures, lettres, rolles or registres of the storie of Tours, mo than a reve gadereth inne stalkes of fodder in august; the whiche man, old, broken, babberlippede, drinkinge in his corner with-oute a word, smyled the smyling of a doctour in knittinge his browes, which smyling assoiled was atte laste by a "baw!" wel outed, that th' autour caughte, understondinge it was hevy with a fair aventúre historial wher-with he mighte dighte the delices of this fetys book.

Lo!

Lo! up-on the morwe, this olde kaynard him seyde:

"By your ditee, entitled the *Venial sinne,* ye have wonne my gode wil for ay, for al is ther verray and sooth from heved to fote, and this, as to me, is precious over any thing. But ye wite nat, y-gesse, what bi-fil of the Morisca brought un-to religioun by thilke lord Bruyn of the Roche-Corbon. This woot I, my-selve. Now, and yow wolde lernen aught of thilke strete name and eek of your egypcien nonne, I shal yow lenen an old queynt record founde by me out of the *Olim* at th' erchebisshoppes house, wher-with libraries were a litel what to-shaken in a tyme when no man niste nat by an evening whe'r he sholde have his heved on sholdres a-morwe. Lo! wol this wel lyke yow?"

"Ye," seyde th' autour.

Now, this worthy gaderer of trewe thinges took somme dusted perchemins un-to th' autour and he, nat but with sore travayl, hem translated in-to frensshe; and they were right olde charters of the bisshoppes court. Him thoughte that no thing nere delitablere than the verray tale of a caas wher-in sheweth the unknowinge childlinesse of goode folk by dayes olde.

So, herkneth! Lo, here th' ordre in which were thise scriptures whiche th' autour hath used in his owene wyse for-why hir langage was wonderly hard to rede.

WHAT THE TALE WAS OF A SUCCUBUS

† *In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

In the yere of oure lord oo thousand and two hundred sevenety and oon, beforn me Jerome Cornille, heigh penitauncer, juge of court cristen, ordeyned by messieurs of the chapitre of Seynt Maurice chirche cathedrale of Tours, hem-selve havinge, in presence of oure lord Johan of Monsoreau, erchebisshop, avysed up-on the pleyntes and miseses of the tounes-folk whos peticioun is annexed here-with, arn forth-comen sondry heye-men and burgeyses, and eek vileyns of the diocyse; whiche that han told thise thinges on a feend, suspect he is, he have y-take lyknesse of a womman, the whiche greveth sore the soules of the diocyse, at this tyme stokked in the chapitre gayle; and, so that a sooth be wist ther-of, have we lete doon write forth thise rolles, this monday, th' elevente day of Decembre, at-after masse, by-cause of shewinge the wordes of everiche to the forseyde feend, apposinge this ilke of the misdedes leyd to him and deminge him by the laws *contra daemonios.*

In this enqueste, for endytinge of it al, hath us holpen William Tournebousche, clerk of the Chapitre, a lerned man.

Firste, is comen beforn us John, height Tortebras, burgeys of Tours, holdinge, by lycence,

lycence, the Stork hostelrye in the commune place atte brigge, which that y-swore hath by his soule savacioun, his hond up-on the holy gospelles, nought to telle but that him-self hath seyn and herd. Thanne, hath he seyd:

"I bid witnessen that, wel two yeer er Seynt-Johnnes day, whan bone-fyres ben maked, a gentil man to me unknowen but, for the firste sighte, he longed til oure lige lord and late was repeired ayein from Holy Lond, com to me, axinge to lete him by lees a contree hous built by me within the baillye of the chapitre, neigh the place called Seynt-Steven; the whiche I leet him out to nyne yeer for three byzaunts of fyne gold. In this house, y-stalled thilke lord a fair wenche of his, beringe apparaunce of womman, y-clothed after the foreine fasoun of Saracenes and Maumets whom that he nolde lete no man seen ne neighen with-inne bowe-shot; but, as I saugh with yë, hir heed was bigoon with a flauntinge fether-hame, hir face was of fayëryë hewe and hir eyen, glowinge more than I may telle, wrythede out helle fyr. The knight that is deed, as that he threted he wolde quelle whom-so but snorted up ayeins thilke house, ich leet it him by muchel awe; and, to this day, have I leyd un-to my soule privee misbileves and doutes of th' evyl lokinge of this straunge body, so fressh that lyk to hir never thoughte me seen.

Sondry manere folk, by that tyme, wenden

the forseide knight had been deed and only stode up-on feet by charmes, love-drinkes, craft of images and feendly enchauntements of this seminge womman that hadde minde to dwelle in oure londe. My-self, ich alwey saugh this sir knight, he was so pale and fade, I was wont to lyknen his visage un-to wex of a lenten taper; and, to knowinge of alle of Stork inne, he was under erthe y-grave at the nynthe morwe after his cominge. So as his yeman seyde, this ilke knight joyned him-self in hoot pleye with the forseide Morisca by sevene dayes a-strecche, bi-shet in myn hous, he never com oute, as I herde him confesse ful grisly in his deeth-bedde.

Somme tho seyde how this she-devel knitted up-on hir-selve thilke gentil man with hir longe heres that woln ben astored of hote propertees, thurgh whiche ben taken to Cristene fyr of helle in gyse of love, makinge hem that they swinke so fer-forth til that hir soule be out-drawen and y-sesed to Sathanas. Sothe to seye, ne nothing saugh I, but it be this knight half-quik, broken of lendes, fordrye, fordoon, wilninge, maugree his confessour, to wenden ayein til his baude. And men knew him as he was Lord Bueil that wente to holy war and, as telleth folk, was under a feend wham that he mette in asiatyke contrees of Damaske or outhere places.

Ther-fore thanne, leet I myn hous, by articles of covenaunt, to th' unknowen lady; and,

and, thilke Lord Bueil parted henne, wente I eft thider, so that I mighte knowen of hir whe'r she wolde dwelle forth; and, with greet peyne, was I leten inne by a straunge man, half naked, blak and with whyte eyen. Thanne saugh I thilke Morisca, arayed lighte, in a bour shyninge of gold and perree lighted with manye candeles, sete up-on a tapite of Asye by oon that was lesinge his soule; and no spirit hadde I to loke up-on hir, hir eyen wolde have egged me to caste my-selven til hir forth-right; lo, hir voys thrilled in my body, filled my brayn and corrupted my soule. So, what for fere of godde and eek of helle, I fleigh anoon, levinge myn hous quitly as longe as hir liste; for peril was it swich to see hir morisshe rode, whenne sourdede devel blastes of hete, hir foot, smaler than verray womman, by right, sholde have; and, ther-with, to here hir voys that skipped aboute myn herte; and, fro this forth, I roughte nat to torne ayein, so dradde I helle. I seye na-mo."

To this for-seyde Tortebras, we thanne shewede an Abyssinien, Ethiopen or Nubien wight which that, blak from heed to fote, was founde to lakke tho thinges of manhode that generally bi-longeth un-til alle Cristene men; the whiche, havinge holden forth in silence after he hadde been tentered and twist, nat but with muchel weyling, was convict that he coude nat oure langage. And witnesse knew ayein th' Abyssinien forseide heretyk; for he woned

in thilke house in-fere with the feendly spirit and was in suspect that he abetted hir sorcerie.

And thilke Tortebras confessed his mochel cristen feyth, sweringe that he niste thing elles; ne but certeyne wordes, knowen of alle, of whiche he mighte non other weyes witen but as he hadde hem herd. Up-on a writ served un-to him, thanne appered Mathieu, called Cognefestu, a plowman of Seynt-Stevenes cloos which that, as he swoor up-on the god-spelles to speke trewe, bi-knew how that he hath ever seyn muche light in the house of thilke fremede womman and herd manye a tyme boistous and feendly laughtre, by day and by night, up-on halidayes, vigilyes and fasting-dayes, most in holy wayk and cristemasse tyde, as it were fele folk gadered to-gider. Thanne, quod he, hath he seyn in at windowes alles-kinnes floures and grene, growed on winter by magyke, and namely roses by frosty weder, forth with outhere thinges for whiche nedeth greet warmnesse. But it was nat to wondren, for so hote glowed this comeling that, after that she welk endelong his wal ayein even-tyde, he fond a-morwe, his herbes were sprongen uppe; and ofte hadde she, with the fethering of hir gown, sent up the sap to trees and hasted the knoppes. Finally to seye, thilke Cognefestu niste na more, for as muchel as he gan delve at cokkes crowe and wente to reste at roosting-tyme.

Thanne, was thilke Cognefestus wyf after takinge

takinge of hir ooth, boden telle the thinges of hir knowleche as by this caas; and she nolde nat outen but preysing of thilke straunger womman, for sith the coming of the same, hir housbonde ferde bet with hir, 'long on thilke *bonne dame* that caste aboute love in th' eyr as doth the sonne his bemes; and othre impertinent janglinges whiche we nat entred. The seyd Cognefestu and his wyf, we kidde hem the seyd unknowen auffrican, seyn by hem in the gardines aboute the hous and holden, certeyn, he bi-longeth to forseyd feend.

Thridde, stood forth messire Harduin V, lord of Maillé, which that, bi-soght of us in low manere to make wys holy chirche of that he knew, answerde, him liste wel so; and, erst, he plighte his feyth, as he was trewe knight, to telle namore but that he hath seyn.

Thanne, seyde he, the feend men wot of, he knew hir in the hoost of the holy croys; and in Damaske, the citee, he saugh lord Bueil, that deyede, fighting in listes to winne hir aweye. The forseide baude or feend bi-longed, for the nones, to messire Geffrey V, lord of the Roche-Pozay; and he used for to seye, he hadde brought hir fro the countree of Tours, al were she saracene, of which muche wonder was amonges the frensshe knightes, wel the more for hir beautee was y-told in al the feelde aboute and dide sclaunderouse harmes o thousand. Thilke baude was enchesoun of several homicydes by the wey till Holy Londe,

and

and Roche-Pozay spilte sondry holy werre-yours whiche that wilnede kepe hir to hir owene uságe for, as seyde somme lordes prively guerdoned of hir, she yaf ayein joyes unlyk aught elles in erthe. But, atte laste, lord Bueil slowh Geffrey of the Roche-Pozay, bicominge lord and sire of this felle shethe, and shette hir up in a covent, or harem, as is gyse of sarasenes. Er tho, men used her to here how she rabeled in festeyinges ledenes of fremede londes a score and mo: arabiens, grekish of the latyn empire, morish and namely frensh, trewer than they that alder-best couthe the tunges of Fraunce in the cristen hoost, wher-of suspecioun aroos that she were ful feendly.

Thilke messire Harduin confessed he had nat justed for hir in Holy Londe: it nas neither for fere, ne recchelesnes, ne outher cause; but for aught he wiste, he scapede with-oute skathe what bi-cause he werede on him a gobet of the verray Croys and what bi-cause he kepte a noble lady of londe of Grece, that dide him bote of any bale in voydinge him fro love night and morwe, for she rafte him al sub-staunce and lafte him clene with-oute no-thing in herte ne elles-wher for othre paramours. And witnesse maked us wys that the womman livinge in Tortebras contree-house, she was verraily thilke y-come fro londe of Surryë. For sothe, he saugh hir at thilke house, whider he was ones y-bidde forth by yong daun Croixmare,

Croixmare, which that deyde at the seventhe day, after lady Croixmare his moder, ruyned al out with thilke baude, whos pleyinge bisinesse drow his vital spirites drye, and queynte fantasyes wastede his good.

Of us asked, so as he was a man ful war, wys and preysed of alle, what he gessed of the forseide womman, and bidden disclose his conscience for this was a dredful caas, as by cristen feyth and divyne jugement, thilke lord answerde in this wyse:

That, in the hoost of the holy werreyours, the tale was that alwey was this she-devel a mayde to whom-so swyved hir and that Mammon was, sure, in-with hir, aboute to shape hir newe a virginitee for every lechour; and othre folyes mo of dronkelewe they seyde, that man mighte nat make of a fifte gospel.

But, to telle certeyn, he, olde knight, that list nat pleye for age, he felte as a yong man in this laste soper with messire Croixmare: this feendes voys was comen right til his herte, er yet it flowede thurgh-out his ere, smytinge him of swich boylinge love, his lyf fledde outerly ther-as it is yeven; and, atte laste, but for the Malveyse wyn of which he hadde dronke for to shette his yen and crepe under benches, so he nat sawe the feendly hostesses glowinge yen and nat shente him-self up-on hir, with-oute any wene hadde he disconfited yong Croixmare and y-taken joye but ones of this unerthely womman. Sith, he shrof himself of swich

. evyl

evyl thought and, by rede from above, took ayein from his wyf his relik of the verray croys, taryinge forth in his maner where, ne for any cristen purveyaunce, thilke voys dwelte humminge in his ere; and namely by morwen-inges, hadde he in minde this feendly furie, glowinge as gleed. And, for the sighte of hir was so hoot, it brente him as a yong man, him-self that nas but deed, and caused him faste out-stertinges of vital spirites, wher-fore he craved, that he nat be brought bi-forn thilke emperesse of love to whom, but it were the devel, god hadde graunted power y-nough over man. Thanne, his evidences rad out, with-drow he, yet nat er that he hadde knowen the forseide auffrican ben the lady swain and page.

Ferthe, under oure bi-heste on bihalve of the chapitre and of oure lord th' erchebisshop, that he nat be tormented, pyned and elles nat anoyed, ne called ayein, ne letted of any viages aboute his chapmanhede, and that he mighte departe at his large, is comen til oure presence a jew, Salomon al Raschild by his name, which that, for al the shrewednesse of him-selve and his Ebraik lawe, was herd of us, even for hool the sooth to witen as of thilke forseide feend. But of him, Salomon, nas taken noon ooth: he dwelleth out of holy chirche, sondred from us by the blode of oure Saveour (*trucidatus Salvator inter nos.*) Axed why he appered with-oute the grene howve on his heed and the yelwe wheel at his

herte after ordinaunces of holy chirche and oure lige lord, thilke al Raschild shewede us forth lettres patentes of acquytaunce, y-entred by the heigh-styward of Toureyne and Poictou. Thanne, tolde the forseide jew that he maked hadde greet chaffar with the lady logged in the hous of Tortebras hostiler; sold hir goldene candel-stikkes queyntliche y-wrought, vessels of gold-faw, coupes fretted of stones, emeraudes and rubyes; fecched fro th' orient preciouse clothes, tapites of Perse, silkes and sotile mossulines; at o word, swiche brighte and rare jeweles and ostelments, no quene in cristendom nere so wel apparayled; and ther-aboute, as of him, his chevisaunce was three hundred thousand frankes, payd by thilke lady for newe thinges, as, floures of Inde, popinjayes, briddes, fetheres, spycerie, wynes of Grece and dyamauntz.

Comaunded by us, juge, to tellen whether he sold hir hadde drogges un-to magyke art, as, blood of newe-born babe, augrim-stones and what-so-ever falleth ther-to, us-selven yevinge him lycence to speken at his large, so that, for this, he ne nevere be holden uppe, thilke al Raschild swoor up-on his feyth ebraike that he nought used swich chaffar. He bisied him, quod he, with over-muche hye nedes, he mighte nat casten him-self un-to no swiche thinges smale, for he was silver-smith to mighty lordes, and namely to the markis of Montferrat, the king of Engelond, the king of Cypre and Jerusalem,

Jerusalem, th' erl of Provence, oure lordes of Venyse and othre folk of Alemayne; that he hadde alles-kinnes barges of his owene, seylinge til Egipte under seurtee of the sowdan, and he boughte and solde costlewe ware of golde and silver that broughte him ofte to the minte of Tours. For sothe, quod he, as to him, he heeld thilke lady spoken of, that she was a verray trewe womman of kinde, oon the sweteste of forme and leveste he ever saugh. Lo, up-on hir name of feendly spirit, prikked of new-fangelnesse and desyr, he hadde, on a day she was a widwe, proposed ben hir wight, which she graunted. Now, although of this glade night, he longe after felte his joyntes unknit and lendes broken up, he hadde nat founden, as somme wende, that who-so fil ther-inne, he never retourned ayein but malt awey as leed in an alkamistres croslet.

Thanne, thilke Salomon, to whom we lafte his sauf-garde, maugree thise sentences that proeve, as of hem-self, his felaweshipe with the devel, sith he hath been scathelees ther-as Cristene use to sterve, he leyde us forth an acord as to thilke feend. As namely: that he offrede the chapitre for this fantome of a womman swich a raunsoun, and she were demed to the deeth, the hyeste stepel of the cathedrale, as now a-werkinge, mighte ben up-built.

This profre, we noted, for to be delibered in dewe tyme, and thilke Salomon took him-self aweye;

aweye; he nolde telle wher he dwelled, seyinge he mighte be wissed of th' avysement of th' asembled chapitre by a jew of the jewerye of Tours y-clept Thobie Nathaneus.

Thilke jew, er he departed, we shewede him forth th' auffrikan; and he a-kennede him for the feendes page. And, quod he, the Sarasenes usen thus to gelde hir thralles, for settinge hem to wacche over hir wommen, after an old uságe, as the bokes of profane historie tellen, and namely on Narsez, duk in Constantinenoble, and othere.

A-morwe, after masse, is appered biforn us, fifte, the right heighe and worshipfulle lady Croixmare; the whiche, sworen up-on the holy gospelles, tolde, with teres, how she beried hir elder sone, brought of lyve for his fool-lusty loves with a femele feend; which noble man was of elde three and twenty yeer, of good entayle, ful manly with mochel here up-on his berd lyk his fader that is deed. For al his pith, in ninety dayes space, he sokingly welked, bi-shent by the succubus of hote strete, if men sholde trowe the comune tale; and no-thing doughte hir moder auctoritee.

Finally, in his laste dayes, was he y-shronke as any pore dreyed werm swich as wyves swepe up in holes and corners. And stille as he hadde strengthes to go, this sone wente him forth and wasted his lyf up-on this shrewe, for whom also he emptede his purs. Thanne, whan he y-brought was to bedde and saugh

cominge

cominge his ende, he swoor, raved, thretede; revyled suster, brother and hir, his moder; bi-shrewed the chapeleyn un-to his nose, reneyed god and wilned to deye as a wrecche caytif; wher-at were al wo-bigoon the servauntz whiche, for relesing of his soule and haling it out of helle, foundede two yeerliche masses in heved-chirche. Thanne, for to have his buriel in halwed grounde, is hoten the hous of Croixmare to yeve the chapitre by an hundred yeer the wex for chapelles a-palme-sondayes.

Laste of al, but if it were the mis-wordes herd of the reverent persone of daun Lowis Pot, monk of Marmoustiers, y-come for to attende ayeins his deeth thilke baroun Croix-mare, seyde thilke lady, she hadde never herd speke nought by hir sone of the feend that him tourmented. And forth wente the noble and worshipfulle lady in hevy sorwe.

Sixte, is appered in oure presence, after ajournement, Jacquette, y-clept Old-Grese, a kichen-drugge, charinge aboute in logginges to wasshe and wype disshes, as nouthe woninge bi-syde fish market; and she, after she hadde sworen by hir feyth no-thing to seye but she helde it for a sothe, spak thus: namely that, y-comen on a day in-to thilke feendes kichen, of whom she was nought fered, sith he was woned nat to fede him but only of males, she hadde leyser to seen in the yerde this femele feend, y-clothed fyne, rominge up and doun, in-fere

in-fere with a knight with whom she lough as she were a womman of kinde. Thanne, knew she hir as she shewede the lyfly lyknesse of the morisca brought un-to religioun atte covent of Oure Lady of th' Esgrignolles by the decessed lord heigh-styward of Toureyne and Poytou, messire Bruyn, erl of the Roche-Corbon; the whiche morisca was forlaft in stede and roume of th' image of Oure Lady the Vergene, mooder of oure blessed saveour, rifled by egypciens wel eighteten winter biforn. Upon thise dayes whiche ben gon out of minde after the grete stryf that rente Toureyne, this wenche, twelf yeer of age, was sauved fro the fyr ther-as she sholde ben y-brent in takinge baptisme, and this ilke heigh-styward and heigh-stywardesse were godsibbes to this doughter of helle. By that selve tyme, witnesse, as she was a lavender of the covent, she wiste of thilke egypciene wenches vanisshing twenty monthes after hir profession: no man niste how, it was so sket. Thanne, of alle was demed that, by helpinge of the devel, she were outflowen thurgh the eyr, for, how so men gan loke up and doun, no trace of hir escaping nas founden.

As he, Auffrikan, was shewed to thilke drugge, she seyde she hadde nat seyn him, al longed she so, for he kepte the dore of thilke stewe wher-as the morisca dide hir bisinesse with tho whos lyf she tapped al oute.

Seventhe, biforn us was brought Huwe du Fol,

Fol, sone to messire of Bridoré, the whiche, of twenty yeer old, was delivered under bond and surement un-to his fader that answereth and is joyntly ateint in this plee, for-as-muche as he, thilke Huwe, is accused and proeved that he hath, with abet of several unknowen yonge lorels, bi-leyd the prisoun of the erchebisshoppe and chapitre and doon his might to destourbe holy chirche justyse in castinge the flighte of the feend that was of seyd. Ne for his evyl wil, we charged him to witnessen in trouthe as to that he sholde knowe of thilke feend, to-gider with whom he is sore in suspeccion that he be plighted, monestinge that bothe his savacioun and the lyf of thilke feendly body lyen in balaunce. The whiche, after takinge of his ooth, seyde:

"I swere by my soule savacioun and by the holy gospelles, lyinge under myn hond, that the womman wend for to ben a feend, I holde hir for an hevenish parfit creature, yet more of soule than of lyf, livinge in al fairnesse, overflowing of gladnesse and grace; she is no-thing froward and is free to the pore and syke. I have seyn hir, I telle you wel, wepen verray teres in the dethe of my freend, baron Croixmare. And, bi-cause, on that day, she highte a-vowe til oure lady the Vergene that never-mo wolde she receyve as in servyse of love swiche yonge gentil-men as were to unstedfaste of flesshe, wher-fore hath she, ful ofte a day with heigh coráge, deneyed me joye of hir body; but,

but, eek also, hath she leyd on me hir herte, and that she hath maad me of lord.

Ever sithen this wel-willy yift, nat for al my quikeninge desyr, she is sete hir allone in hir bour wher I spended my dayes, happy to bi-holden hir and heren. So was I wont to take meles bi-syde hir, livinge in the eyr she brethed, under the lighte that lighte hir brighte eyen, findinge in swich daliaunce joye more than the halwes an heigh.

Chosen to ben, for ay, my lady, and to bi-com som day my douve, my wyf and only freend, she nath graunted me, woful wight, no redy token of the blisses to comen, but, al the revers, hath me yeven vertuouse avyses o thousand; as, that I sholde winne name of trewe knight; bi-comen a stronge and comely man; fere nought, out-take god; honoure ladyes, serve but oon and cheryce hem alle for hir sake: thanne, whan I were y-harded with werkes of werre, and myn herte helde, thanne only sholde she yeve me hir mercy, but, in mene whyle, she wolde love me wel faste for the beste."

And, with that, yong sir Huwe gan breste a-wepe and, wepinge, seyde:

That, thenkinge on this fayre and meke womman whos armes semede whylom to fetys to bere the litel wighte of hir gilden cheynes, now leyd in yrens and cruelliche holden in duresse, he was woxen wel-nigh mad; and this was cause of his rebelling. And he nedes moste

moste make wo bi-fore the court; for so was his lyf bounden with this lufsom lady and freend that, if ever evyl bitidde hir, he sholde dyen, it is no drede.

And that selfe noble child louded out preysinges o thousand mo of thilke feend that shewe the blak enchauntement sprad over him, and eek the abhominable, hidous, horowe lyf, and the shrewed lees he is now thral to, as of which shal deme oure lord erchebisshop, so that, by exorcisaciouns and penaunces, he sauve this yonge soule from helle snares, but-if the devel be goon to fer inne.

Eighteth, beforn us, the usshers of oure lorde erchebisshop have lad the right worshipfulle and reverent lafdy, dame Jacqueline of Champchevrier, prioresse of the covent, called after Mount Carmel, un-to whos charge was committed, by the lord heigh styward, that is deed, of Toureyne, fader of th' erl of the Roche-Corbon, as now atorney for thilke covent, th' egypcien child, y-nempned on font-stoon Blaunche Bruyn.

The forseide lafdy, we unfoldede hir at shorte wordes this ilke proces that toucheth holy chirche, the glory of godde, th' everlastinge blisse of folk of this diocyse greved with a feend and, also, the lyf of a creature that, by wey of possibilitee, mighte ben innocent at al.

Thanne, the caas y-set, axeden we that ilke lady to telle that was of hir knowleche as of the magik vanisshinge maked by hir doughter in godde,

godde, Blaunche Bruyn, y-taken to wyve of oure saveour under name of suster Clara.

Thanne, answerde ayein the right-noble, right-worshipfulle and right-puissaunt lafdy prioresse in this wyse:

That suster Clara, of burthe to hir unknowe, but suspected she came of heretyke fader and moder, foon to godde, was verraily brought un-to religioun atte covent the governing of which, under holy chirche, was fallen to hir maugree hir unworthinesse.

This suster wente thurgh hir novyshood of stedfast purpos and maked hir profession under this holy Ordres reule. Thanne, wex she al drery. Freyned of hir, prioresse, what mighte be to mene hir langour, thilke suster answerde ayein with teres, she niste nat the cause why. She fil in wepinges o thousand and oon, for she ne felte no mo hir fayre heres up-on hir heed. Ther-to was she a-thirst of ëyr, ne coude nat forbere of skippinge among treës, of climbing, of dauncing hir reyes and tourninges after th' uságe of hir lyve in feeld and wood, under whos leefsel she leye of tyme yore; and, as she missed it al, she lived looth of the cloystre ëyr that dide swelle the pypes of hir longes. Ther gan breden in-with hir yvele founes and, ofte sythes, was she inly twight in chirche with thoughtes whiche diden hir lese hir hewe. Lo! thanne, preched I til hir, povre wight, of holy chirche lore; I tolde hir which blisse withouten ende they rejoye of in paradys,

paradys, rightfulle wommen, how swift a mite-whyle was lyves estaat and how certeyn goddes goodnesse whos love, for som wrecched lisse forgoon, wolde ever lasten. Nat for al this wyse moderly rede, th' evyl goost dwelled in hir forth; and, day by day, looking out fro chirche windowes, at masse and even-song, she fastnede hir eyen on the leves and the greses; thanne, dide she hir might for to loke paper-whyt, of weywardnesse, that so she mighte liggen lenger a-bedde; and, stoundemele, she trotted aboute cloystre as goot untyed fro stake. For fyn, she loste hir hele and goodly beautee and tornede in-to a shrimpe. At this nede, we, prioresse, hir moder, feringe lest she deyde, we putte hir up in the fermery. In som winter morwe, lo, lo! thilke suster was flowen; ther nere no steppes of hires, no broken dores, ne clikets unpinned, ne thing wher-by hir vanisshing were couth. Whiche a grisly aventure! men heeld opinion it were shapen by the devel that throwed hir and twiste. And, atte laste, concluded was of the hevedes of Tours chirche that this doughter of helle were sent uppe for to mislede the nonnes from hir holy weyes and that, al a-mased for hir right-wyse lyves, she were swommen over the spaces of the ëyr, bakwarde to the sabbath of the wicches that, yore agon, leften hir, to scorne holy chirche, in the Vergene Marie stede.

She hadde seyd, and the lady prioresse, with greet processioun as by heste of oure lorde erchebisshop,

erchebisshop, was lad ayein to Mount Carmel.

Nyneth, is come forth, up-on a writ, Joseph, y-clept Leschalopier, moneye-changeour, dwellinge above the brigge at the signe of the *goldene byzaunt,* which that, after sweringe up-on his cristene feyth he wolde nought seye but the sooth, knowen of him as to the caas bi-fore court, leyde witnesse as followeth:

" Ik am a povre fader, sore preved by goddes wille. Er she com inne, the mare of hoot strete, I hadde, as my moste precious good, a sone; he was wel-lokinge as a gentil man, sotil as a clerk, he was faren toward ferne londes twelf tyme and mo; ther-with-al, was he a good cristen, holding a-weye fro the fyry strokes of loves desiring and was looth to wedde, sith he was the staf of myn olde age, the love of myne eyen and the lastinge joye of myn herte. He was a sone with whom a king were plesed, a trewe swinker, my bettere arm, light of my chaffar and, laste of al, an inestimable richesse, for ik am al-allone in erthe, it was my bale to lese my wyf and ik am to old to geten me oon of my flesshe. Now thanne, sire, this tresour with-oute pere me hath been raft and put in helle with the feend. Ye, sir juge, also sone as he caught a sighte of this shethe un-til a thousand wepnes, this she-devel in which ech thing is werking of dampnacioun, joynture of lecherye and delectacioun that nought may staunche, the povre child was glewed in the lyme-rod

lyme-rod of hir love and fro thenne-forth livede but bitwixe Venus pilers, and nat ther but a short whyle, for in thilke stede is so gledy hete, ne no-thing may slake the thirst ther-of though ye caste inne the sedes of al the world. Allas the whyle! my pore sone, his purs, his hope of engendrure, his soule savacioun, himself al, ye, more than him-selve, was droped un-to this depe as barly-corn un-to mosel of a bole. In this wyse, y-worthe, I, child-biraft fader, not shal I have other joye, quethe I, but to see rosted this feend, fed of blood and gold, this loppe that hath enlaced in hir webbe and souked uppe mo mariede lyves, mo children un-born, mo hertes, mo cristene than ne ben lazars in lazar-houses of cristendom.

As brenneth ye, tourmenteth this glotoun, this blood soukere, this tygre kinde fedinge on men, this lampe of love ther-in boyleth the venim of alle naddres. As shette this chyne: it is past depthe to man.... Ik offre my pens to the chapitre for the fyr and myn arm for putting the brond. Loke ye, sir juge, that ye kepe streite this devel; she brenneth of an hotter flaumbe than any erthely fyr. She hath hete of helle in hir wombe, strengthe of Sampson in hire heres and semblaunce of hevenly musyke in hir stevene. She biwiccheth for to kille lyf and soule at a swappe; she smyleth for to byte; she kisseth for to upfrete; at o worde, she wolde corrumpe a seynt and doon him reneye god. O my sone! my sone!

sone! Wher is bi-come my lyves flour, clipped with this wommanly shethe as with sheres. Ha! sir juge, what have ye called me forth? Who shal me yeven ayein my sone whose soule is foundred in a wombe that taketh deeth til alle and ne to none lyf? The devel allone assembleth and not bredeth. This is my record and I bidde mayster Tournebousche wryte it forth, nat over-hopping o word and yeve me a libel ther-of, for that I seye it in my preyeres a-nightes, and, creyinge to goddes ere the blood of innocence, that I bi-gete of his infinite mercy the foryifnesse of my sone."

Ther followeth sevene and twenty sawes mo, the trewe writinge of whiche, to hir fulle purpos, nat lesing o word wolde drecche, drawe out on lengthe and take misweye the clewe of this queynte plee which sholde; after the teching of olde tyme, gon right to the poynt as the bole in his cheef office. Lo, heer, at wordes fewe, the pith of thise evidences:

By a greet numbre of trewe Cristene, burgeyses, ladyes, peple of Tours, the noble citee, was seyd: that this feend hadde holden, day by daye, royalle festes and revels; that she nas never seyn in no chirche; that she hadde scorned god and laughed at his preestes; that ne nevere hadde she blessed hir-self no-wher; that she coude every langage in erthe, the which god never vouched sauf to none but the holy apostelles; that, ofte, was she met rydinge in feeld up-on an uncouthe beste that ferde

ayeins

ayeins the cloudes; that hir body never wex old and hir face loked alwey yong; that she had unteyed her girdel bothe for fader and sone in the same day, seyinge, hir gate dide no sinne; that banefulle vertues pleynly stremede from hir, and ensaumple why: a bakere sete on a benche by his threshfolde, cacchinge a sighte of hir up-on an even, was smiten of swich a breeth of love that, wendinge inne, he caste him on bedde and swyved his wyf in soor rage; and he was founden deed by the morwe, ay swinking; that olde men of the toun mis-spente the remenaunt of hir dayes and substaunce at hir shoppe, for that they sholde taste of newe to sinnes of youthe; that they storven as gnattes with hir hedes to the wal, and that somme tornede blake as mores; that this feend ne leet hir-self nat seen at diner tyme, ne at collacioun, ne at soper; but she eet allone, for she fedde hir of mennes braynes; and somme hadde seyn hir gon by night to chirche-hawes to bayte on dede children, she mighte nat otherweys staunche the devel that rampede in hir entraille and maddede as a tempest; and by thise causes sprongen the stormye, aspre, bytinge, sharpe, thrillinge, throbbinge and feendlye lollinges, halsinges, hurtlinges of lyking.and lecherye, fro whenne men comen ayein blake and blo, twist, biten, y-broke, beten doun; and that, sith the come of oure Lorde which that caste the mayster-devel in-to the swyn, saugh nevere man no-wher in erthe so fel,

fel, attry and clawinge a beste, so fer-forth that, if men but threwe Tours citee in-to this Venus feelde, it sholde wende in sede to tounes, and thilke feend wolde swelwe it al lyk strawbery.

Ther-to an heep of outhere sawes, sentences and evidences that shewede forth th' infernal engendrure of thilke, the develes doughter, suster, ayel, dame, wenche or brother, withouten othere preves demonstratifs of hir shrewednesse and of the harmes brought in by hir to alle homes. And, if it leste men to tellen heer alle thinges endyted in the record kept by the good-man that fond it out, wel sholde they semen an ensaumple of thise horrible cryes that up-gave th' Egypciens up-on the seventhe wounde. For-why this storye, the wryting of it doth muche honour un-to mayster William Tournebousche, by whom ben marked the rolles.

In this tenthe sessioun, was thus y-closed this enqueste, comen un-to his rypenesse of preves, set out with evidences autentyke, suffisauntly y-knit togider with articles, pleyntes, entredits, replicaciouns, acciouns, semonces, arguments, opene and derne confessiouns, sworen wordes, ajournements, heringes and suggestiouns, ther-to sholde the feend replye. And so seyde alle burgeyses by oon voys that, were the prisouner verrayly a shedevel and purveyed of inwarde hornes, in-set with-inne hir nature, wher-with she lapped up men

men and crushed hem, wel sholde she swimmen longe in this see of wrytinges, er she arryved, hool and sounde, un-til helle.

HOW THAT IT WAS DOON BY THILKE FEMELE FEEND

† *In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

In the yere of oure lord oo thousand and two hundred sevenety and oon, biforen us, Jerome Cornille, heigh penitauncer, juge of court cristen, y-set ther-to by holy chirche, ben forth-comen:

Sir Philippe Ydré, bailiff of Tours, the toun and citee, and of the countee of Toureyne, dwellinge at his hostel, Vitaillers strete, at Chasteauneuf; mayster John Ribou, provost of the þretherhed and craft of clothers dwellinge in the stronde, cleped "of Britayne," with the image of *Seynt Peter in bondes*; Sir Antony Jahan, sherreve, cheef of the fraternitee of eschangeours, dwellinge bisyde the commune brigge place, with th' image of *Seynt Marc tellinge Tourneys frankes*; mayster Martin Maupertuis, capitayn of the toun archeers, dwellinge at the castel; John Rabelais, ship-peyntour, buildinge barges, dwellinge at the wharf of Seynt-James yle, tresorour of the bretherhede of shipmen of Loyre; Marc Jerome, y-clept Maschefer, hosere,

hosere, atte signe of *Seynte Sebastiana,* president of the liveree-men, and James, called Villedomer, mayster-taverner and vynour, dwellinge in heigh strete, atte signe of the Pyn-appel; to the whiche sir Philippe Ydré and thilke burgeyses of Tours, we radde the Requeste next after, writen, signed and delibered by hem for that hit be leyd biforn bisshoppes court:

REQUESTE

We, under-signed, burgeyses of Tours, as now asembled in the hous of oure lord, sir Philippe Ydré, baillif of Toureyne, in the absence of oure mayre, have him sesed of oure pleintes and grevaunces touchinge the charges we here-by undertake to pursue biforn the court of the bisshop, juge of crymes in canon lawe, able for to deme the caas we bidde unfolden:

Longe agon is comen in-to this toun a wikked feend, under contenaunce of womman, that wonieth in-with Seynt-Stevenes cloos, in Tortebras hostileres house, stondinge in the baillye of the chapitre, under temporal justyse of the erchebisshoppes demeyne; which straunger womman let the lyf of a comune strompete, sturdely, out of al mesure and in swich encrees of harme that she is lykely to spille the cristen feyth in this toune, for-asmochel as tho that goon un-to hir torne ayein

utterly

utterly lorn of soule and eschewe help of holy chirche with fele sclenderouse speches.

And now, wher-as manye of tho that take hem-self to hir ben dede, and this womman, y-come til oure toun with-oute no-thing but hir natúre, hath and halt, after folk telleth, richesse an heep and royalle tresoures, geten as is faste suspected thurgh enchanterie or elles ravynes doon with the bi-wicchinge lures of hir wonder lufsom body;

Wher-as thise thinges touchen the worshipe and sauftee of oure homes; for never, in this lond nas seyn no fool-womman or lemman, using hir craft so damageously and thretinge so apertly and kenely the lyves, catel, maneres, chastetee, religioun, and al, of oure evene-citizeines;

Wher-as it nedeth of an enqueste at regards of hir persone, godes and doinges by cause of findinge out whether swiche effectes of love ben rightfulle and ne arysen nat, as sheweth by hire gestes, of a malefyce of Sathanas that, ofte, seketh up-on cristendom in wommannes shap as witnesseth holy writ, for so hit telleth how Lucifer, or Astaroth, took oure blessed saveour in-to a ful heigh hil and shewede to him alle the reaumes of the worlde and the joye of hem; and, in sondry places, ther hath ben seyn succubuses or goblynes in wommannes shap, whiche that, lothe to torne ayein to helle-warde and, kepinge with-in hem unquenchable fyr,

peyne

peyne hem to refresshe and refecte hem-selves in soukinge inne soules;

Wher-as that, up-on the forseide womman be gessed thousand tokenes of develes pestilences, whiche that fele tounes folk speken on openly; and that bi-hoveth, for hir owene sake, the matere be brought to preve, lest she be ronne up-on by manye, shent with hire wikkede harlotryes;

By thise causes, we bisechen so lyke yow leye bi-forn oure lord espirituel, fader of this diocyse, the right-noble and holy erchebisshop John of Montsoreau, the pleintes of his sorwefulle sheep, for he may avyse;

Ther-by shulle ye fulfille your office, and we oure owene as ministres of the comune wele, everich by that he hath up-on honde in his place of the toune.

And we have signed this requeste in the yere of oure lord oo thousand and two hundred seventy and oon, on alle-halwes day, after masse.

Whanne that mayster Tournebousche hadde rad out this peticioun, we, Jerome Cornille, seyde un-to peticiouneres thise wordes:

"Lordinges, abyde ye to-day by youre sentences? Have ye preves mo than ben y-come til oure knowleche, and undertake ye to holden up al sooth, as in that, bi-fore god, men and prisounere?"

Alle abiden up-on hir assent, save mayster John Rabelais; and thilke Rabelais took himself

self out of the caas, seyinge: he heeld thilke morisca for a womman of kinde, a jolif wenche, the whos only lak was, she kepte ful ardaunt hete by love.

For alle whiche resons, we, juge by commission, after dewe avysement, have founde matere of to deme in thilke burgeyses pursute ayeins the womman distreyned in the chapitre gayle and awarde that accioun be taken, by processe of lawe, under decrees *contra daemonios,* bothe of holy chirche and of oure lige lord.

This libel, now put forth as a mandement, shal be don cryen thurghout the citee by soun of trompe, for that ech knowe hit and bere witnesse after his conscience bi-forn thilke feend, the whiche shal have a deffendour as wont is; and for that interrogaciouns and pursute be faire sped.

signed: JEROME CORNILLE,
and next after: TOURNEBOUSCHE.

† *In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

In the yere of oure lord oo thousand and two hundred sevenety and oon, the tenthe day of Februare, at-after masse, by disponinge of us, Jerome Cornille, juge of court cristen, was y-brought out of the chapitre gayle and un-to us, the womman hent in the hous of the hostiler Tortebras, the whiche hous stant in the baillye of

of the chapitre of Seynt Maurice cathedrale, she, thilke womman, being underput to the erchebisshoppes temporel and lordly justyse; and, forther-over, by cause of the speces of crymes aretted to hir, she stant with-in the daunger of bishoppes court, al of which we notifyede, for that she hit understode.

And whan hadde ben sadly red, and wel understonden of hir, first, the requeste of the toune; thanne, the sawes, pleyntes, charges and acciouns, writen in two and twenty quayeres by mayster Tournebousche, as they ben aboven expressed, we have, under blessing and help of godde and holy chirche, loked for the sothe and, alderfirst, by axinges put to thilke prisouner. Thanne, enquerede we whe'r she hadde fader, moder or neighe kinrede. By hir, answeringe, was seyd, she nadde hem never knowen. Of us was she thanne boden telle how that she highte. She, answering, seyde:

—Zulma, in arabiens tunge.

—By us was axed why she spak oure langage. By hir, thilke, was seyd:

—By cause she was comen un-to this contree.

—By us was axed:

—How longe agon?

—By hir, was answerd ayein and seyd:

—Aboute a twelf yeer agon.

—By us, was axed, of what age was she thanne.

—She, answeringe, seyde:

—With-inne hir fiftene yeer, or wel neigh.

—By

—By us was seyd:
—Ther-fore, ye be knowinge that ye ben sevene and twenty yeer of elde.
—And she, answeringe, seyde:
—Ye.

By us was seyd, she was, ther-fore, the Morisca founde in the habitácle of oure Lafdy the Vergene, thanne cristened with the erchebisshop, y-holden at font-stoon with the late decessed erl of the Roche-Corbon and damoysele Azay, his wyf; thanne, brought of hem un-to religioun to the covent of Mount Carmel, ther she sholde have maked avowes of chastetee, poverté, stillenesse and love to godwarde, under sely helpinge of Seynte Clara. She, answeringe, seyde:
—So is it.

By us, was axed whether, thanne, she helde for trewe the paroles of the right noble and reverent lady prioresse of Mount Carmel, and eke the sawes of Jacquette, called Old Grese, a kichen-wenche. By hir, was seyd, hir wordes were sothe for the more partye. Thanne, of us, was asked at hir:
—Lo, thanne, ben ye cristen?
And she, answeringe, seyde:
—Ye, fader.

With that, anon, was she boden croyse hirselve and take holy water of a fount y-set to hir honde with mayster Tournebousche. That doon and seyn, it was set of record as thing right siker that Zulma, the morisca, y-clept in oure

oure erthe Blaunche Bruyn, nonne of the abbeye dedicat to Mount Carmel, called there suster Clara and gessed she sholde ben a fals fantóme of a womman, binethen which were a feend, hath, bi-forn us, doon servyse of religioun and, so, knowleched the justyse of court cristen.

By us, tho, were seyd thise wordes:

"Childe, ye ben suspected that ye toke help of the devel in the maner ye wonne fro the covent: it was in every poynt above naturel ordre."

She, answeringe, seyde that on thilke day, she wente naturelly out at dore after even-song under habit of daun John of Marsilis, visitour of the covent, which that logged hir in his haunt in Cupyde Lane, beting on a tour of the toune. Thanne, there, thilke preest scolered hir largely and wel-ynough, quod she, in the sweetes of love of which she was at that tyme al unconninge; the whiche swetnesses hir lykede wel, for she thoughte hem wonder deyntefulle. Thanne, sir Amboise, as he hir saugh at windowe fil love-drunke; and she, quod she, verraily prysinge him more, fleigh fro the stewe ther-as the monk kepte hir to thrift of him-self.

With-inne a whyle, she wente in heigh aray til Amboise, thilke lordes castel, wher she fond thousand desportes, haukinge and dauncinge, and werede robes as a quene. Up-on a day, lord Roche-Pozay was called inne, to dyne and revel;

revel; and baroun Amboise leet him espye hir, quod she, with-oute hir witing, as she com out of bath, naked. Ther-with-al, up-on this sighte, lord Roche-Pozay caughte fyr and at next day, in single fighte, slough baroun Amboise. Thanne he, by violence and strengthe, for any teres, quod she, broughte hir til Holy Londe, wher she ladde the lyf of wommen holden in prys and reverence by hir beautee. Lo, after mochel aventure, was she torned ayein hider, nat for alle hir doutes, for so was the wil of hir lord and mayster, baroun Bueil, that livede deyeinge in Asye londe, so longed he to seen his toun and tour. And, for he seyde, quod she, he wolde helpe hir from al stryf, she beleved and triste on him, wel the more that she lovede with al hir might. But whan he com hoom, baroun Bueil fil in maladye and dyede a wrecched deeth; he nolde no remedyes and yaf noon ere to hir faste bones, for he hatede fysiciens, mayster-leches and poticaries. And this was hool the sooth. Ther-with, was seyd by us to prisouner that she, ther-fore, knew to be sothe the sentences of curteis messire Harduin and of Tortebras hostiler. By hir was answerd ayein, they were clere and y-sene for the more part, as she was a-knowe, and eke false, sclaunderouse and dotard in somme places.

Thanne, by us, was boden prisounere telle whether she hadde felawshiped in love and fleshly copulacioun with alle the noble men, burgeyses

burgeyses and outhere that were y-spoken of. To this, she answerde and seyde ful-boldly:

"Love wel; but, as to copulacioun, I noot nat."

By us was thanne told hir how alle were brought of lyve by hir dede.

By hir, thilke, was answerd, it nas nat hir doing, for the more she seyde hem: "nay," and fleigh, ever the more they folwede hir aboute and sailliede hir, quod she, with mochel ragerie; and, so swythe as she was in armes y-nome, wel yaf she wey and fil til it of hool entente, by cause of joyes unlyk aught elles.

Thanne, seyde she, she tolde of hir inwarde felinges but for that so she were requered, and she, quod she, was adrad of the tormentour. Ther-with-al, of us, was she asked to tellen up peyne of tormentes what she wende in hir witte whan that a noble man was for-worthen after felawshipe with hir. She, answeringe, seyde, she syte and wolde fordoon hir-self; she creyde on god, the vergene and the halwes to fongen hir in paradys; for she, quod she, hadde never met but gode men and trewe in whiche nas no vyce and as, sorwinge, she saugh hem spille, she heeld hir-self a thral to som evyl sort she spradde on-brede as pestilence. Thanne, by us, was she boden telle wher that she bad hir bedes. By hir, answeringe, was seyd: in hir oratorie, on knees, to godde that alle thing hereth, after th' evangyles, and dwelleth est, west, north and south. Thanne, was she axed why

why she not wente to chirche, nouther sondayes ne festes. Ther-to, of hir, answerd was that tho that soughte hir sette tyme on halydayes and she, quod she, folwede hir wil in al. By us was monested til hir, cristenly, that she thus putte hir in the ordinaunce of men rather than of godde. Thanne she, answeringe, seyde that, for the sake of hem that lovede hir wel, she wolde caste hir in hote coles; that nevere, as in love, hadde she pleyd false, and, for the worlde, nolde she lende lykame ne acqueyntaunce yet til a king, but she lovede him of herte, fete, heved, heres, forheed and al. At shorte wordes for sothe, she, as seyde she, ne hadde never pleyd lemman ne sold a singuler spark of love til a man but she hadde him chosen for hir owene, and that who-so hente hir in armes an houres space or kiste a petit on the mouthe hadde hir ever after.

Thanne, by us, was she requered telle whenne comen the jeweles, vesseles of gold and sylvre, fyne stones, royals ostelments, tapites, *et caetera,* cast they be worth two hundred thousand markes, founden in hir habitacioun and yeven on warde to the tresorere of the chapitre. By hir, answering, was seyde: she sette hir trust on us as on godde him-selven, but nought dorste she replye, in as fer as heng ther-by som of the swetteste thinges as in love, of which she hadde alwey lived.

Thanne, pressed of-newe, seyd she, that yif we, juge, wisten in which worshipe she heeld whom-so

whom-so that she lovede, in which buxomnesse she folwede him by ech wey, goode or badde, with which studie she dide his bidding, with which gladnesse she fulfilde his desyrs and brethede inne the sacrede wordes his mouth blessed hir withal, us-selve, olde juge, wolde thenke with hir wel-bilovede that no somme ne mighte quyte thilke mochel affeccioun which alle men renneth after. Eek seyde she thus, that ne nevere hadde she asked of no man, quod she, nouther fee ne shipe; that happy was she to worthen in his herte; that she rouled ther-in with endelees and sely blisse, weninge hir-self welthier for swich oon than for aught elles and lustinge but for to yelden ayein more delyt and joye than she hadde fonged. But nat for alle hir defenses, quod she, hir loveres caste hem ay to guerdone hir hendely. Som-whyle, that oon com with a coler ful of perles, seyinge:

"Lo, heer, to kythe un-to myn hony that the satyn of hir flesshe me sothly semede whyter than perles." And he heng it aboute hir hals and halsede hir right harde. She, that speketh, was angry with thise folyes, yit mighte she nat but kepen a jewel it quemed hem seyn ther-as they hadden it set. Eche dide after his fantasye. Som-whyle, that oon wente rendinge the costelewe garnements she hadde on for delyt of his sighte; outher-whyle, that other, quod she, dide saphyres aboute hir armes, legges, swire or heres; som wolde leyen

hir

hir in the tapite, bi-winde in longe shroudes of blak silk or veluëttes and gauren dayes longe, ravisshed, on hir perfeccioun; and sith thise thinges broughte swich solas to loveres, they delytede un-to hir. Thanne, seyde she, that, in-so-muche as no-thing lyketh man so wel as to have his deyntee and biholde the seel of beautee and armonie with-outen the herte as wel as with-inne, so muche more, hir loveres alle were they fayne to seen hir robe of purpre apyked of lovelieste thinges; and, in this minde, they diden hir beste as muche as she to over-spreden it with gold, silver and floures. Now, so as thise gaye thinges hindrede no-thing, she hadde nouther might ne welde to lette a knight, ne yet any riche squyer of whom she were loved, of doing by hir his moste plesure; and thus was she bounden to take preciouse savoures swet-smelinge and othre tokenes, of whiche she was a-mayed; and that swich was the heed and welle of thilke plates of gold, tapites and jeweles, bi-nome by the sergeants of the toun.

Heer endeth the firste examininge put to thilke suster Clara, suspected that she be a demon, so as we, juge, and William Tourne-bousche were for-wery to heren swich voys in oure ere and oure insighte was blered al oute. By us, juge, was ajourned that other examininge til three dayes henne, to seken out evidences of th' assembling and presence of the demon in the forseide; the whiche, at oure heste,

heste, was lad ayein un-to gayle in keping of mayster William Tournebousche.

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

The thrittenthe day of Februare, biforn us, Jerome Cornille, *et caetera,* was brought forth suster Clara, as her-biforn y-nempned, by cause to been apposed of the dedes and gestes aretted hir and preved up-on hir.

Of us, juge, was seyd to prisounere that, by hir sondry answeres in rathere examininges, cleerly was y-shewed, it lyth not in a playn womman, al hadde she lycense, (set caas swiche lycenses mighte be yeven by any weyes) to leden forth the lyf of a womman fool of hir bodye, doinge the plesaunce of alle men, bringinge aboute so manye foule dethes and castinge swiche lithre malefyces, but she have help of a privee demon dwellinge in hir bodye, to which hir soule sholde have̊ been sold by an especial tretee.

And ther-fore, sheweth that, under hir shap, lyth and liveth a feend, bringer of thise yveles; and she was now sompned to tellen in what age she receyued him, to biwreye whiche termes ben knit bitwene hem and, thanne, to confesse the sooth of hir bother wrenches. By hir, answering, was seyd that she wolde shewe hir confessioun til us, man, as it were to god that shal foryelde us alle. Thanne, pretended she,

as

as she seyde, she hadde never seyn the devel, ne spoken with him, ne in no maner wold him for to seen; that ne never hadde she been a lemman as for hauntinge of a craft; for sothe, she hadde never tasted of loves lykinge but she were moeved with the delyt put in that thing by the soverein maker; and she was alwey drawen un-to it, quod she, rather by cause of being meke and mild til any dere lording biloved of hir than by an ever rampande desyr. Al were it so this sholde ben hir firste moeving, yet bi-soughte us she, quod she, bithinke how that she was a povre auffrican byrde in which god y-set hadde a right fervent blood and, eek, in the intellect set in hir herte, so esy an entente of amorouse delytes that, whan a man lokede on hir, she felte ther a quapping. Thanne, if for lust of felawshipe, a loving gentil man touched hir in any body part, by putting his hand adoun, she was, for any thing, in al his might, for, so, hir herte gan sprede and ryse. With this touchinge, the thought and remembraunce of alle the bisye joyes of love awook in hir midmeste and quikked a fyr that worthed uppe, brente in hire veynes and torned to love-longing and fyr fro heed to fote. And from, first, daun Marsilis in hir, quod she, al opned hadde the understanding of thise thinges, ne never hadde she noon other thought; and ever after, so naturelly yerned she to love that, for lakke of man and kindely bidewing, she had been deed for droughte at thilke

thilke covent. In witnesse wher-of she dorste leye that sith hir flighte, never a day ne felte she no throwe of melancolye but was alwey, quod she, in joye; and thus folwede she godd's holy wil by hir fro which, so she took it, she was misled during al hir tyme lost in thilke covent.

Here-ayeins was showed of us, Jerome Cornille, to thilke demon that, in this answere, blasphemed was apertly of godde, for-why we ben sent in erthe un-to his moste glorie, him for to herien and worshipen, to here his lawe and holde his hestes so that, atte laste, we winne hevene blisse, and nat to be ligging in bed and doing ay that that the selve dombe beestes ne doon but whan tyme is.

Ther-with-al, by thilke suster was answerd that, in alle contrees, she hadde mochel glorifyed god and taken care of the pore and syke, yevinge hem of free honde doles and clothes and wepinge up-on the sight of hire nedes; and at domesday, as was hir hope, she sholde have a goodly meynee of wel-dedes lykinge to godde and creyinge of mercy. Thanne, seyde she, but for humblesse and fere to renne in-to blame or do tene to messires of the chapitre, gladly hadde she despended hir goodes for up-buildinge of the chirche of Seynt-Maurice and foundinge of masses to sauve hir soule, ne sparinge for this ende neither of hir joye ne hir body; and that, with this thought in minde, tweys glade hadde been

hir

hir glade nightes sith that ech of hir loves sholde have put a stoon un-to this chirche. In consideracioun of this fyn and for the blis ever-lastinge of hir, quod she, every lovyere hadde, as of him-self, yeven of his catel right lustsomly.

Thanne, by us, was seyd to thilke demon: she ne coude nat excuse hir that she was bareyne sith that, after so manye copulaciouns, no child nas yet born of hir, the whiche sheweth a demon in-with hir; and, over this, only Astaroth or an apostle coude speke alle tunges as she dide, the whiche proeveth that men mighte gesse in hir a devel. Ther-ayeins was answerd by hir and seyd that, as touchinge dyversitee of tunge, she nought coude on grew, out-take *kyrie eleison* which she used ful mochel; and on latin, nought but *amen*; and this ilke word she seyde to godde hopinge for fredom. More-over, she hadde greet sorwe for she was bareyne; and if wyves wente with childe, it was, paraunter, for they toke plesaunce to menely of that thing, and she, as seyde she, somdel over-mochel. But swich was out of doute the wil of godde which that thoughte with-inne him-self that, for to greet felicitee, the world were in peril to for-spille.

Heringe thise resons and outhere o thousand to, that suffisauntly biwreyen a feend in thilke nonnes bodye, so as the propretee of Lucifer is to holden alwey heretyke arguinges shewinge lyklihed, we comaundede that thilke prisouner

be applyed to torment in oure presence and sore pyned, so that the feend be daunted by suffering and put under holy chirche. So, for helpinge of us, we have called inne Fraunceys Hangest, mayster surgeon and fysicien of the chapitre, bi-takinge him, as by a libel annexed her-with, to loken in the forseyde feendes wyfhod (*virtutes vulvae*), for to teche us what arts she useth in cacching of soules by swich weye, or in othre manere.

Thanne, gan sore to wepen and waile biforehond thilke morisca and, nat for hir fetres, she fil on knees and bi-soughte of relesinge with teres and cryes, apposinge, hir limmes were so feble and bones so brotel, they wolde bresten lyk glas. And, atte laste, she profred to bye hir-self ayein with yifte of hir goodes to the chapitre and to voyden eft-sone the contree.

Her-upon was she boden declare voluntariely that she was, and alwey hadde been, a feend, of the streen of succubi, whiche that ben femeles goblynnes, havinge charge to corrumpen Cristene with the blandissinges and lithre delyces of lecherie. To this, answerde she that, for to seye so were a lesing abhominable sith that she hadde felt hir-self a verray womman at alle rightes. Ther-with-al, whan hir yrens were unbounden by the tormentour, she dide of hir smok and wikkedly and wilfully, derked, blered and overcom oure wit with the sighte of hir body that doth man smyten of monstrous effectes.

Mayster

Mayster William Tournebousche, overcomen by strengthe of nature, hath, heer, leyd doun penne, apposing that he may not loke on swich tormentrye, but his minde be harwed with sharpe temptaciouns and his body overmaystered with the devel.

Heer endeth the secounde examininge and, so as the somnour and gate-ward of the chapitre telleth, mayster Fraunceys of Hangest be out of toune, the pyninge and examininge aren set for to-morwe, at twelve of the clokke, at-after masse.

This hath ben y-entered in the rolle by me Jerome, in absence of mayster William Tournebousche, in feith wher-of we have signed:

JEROME CORNILLE,
Heigh penitauncer.

REQUESTE

Up-on this day, the fouretethe of the monthe of Februare, in presence of me, Jerome Cornille, ben comen forth the forseyde maystres John Ribou, Antony Jahan, Martin Beaupertuys, Jerome Maschefer, James of Ville d'Omer and sir Philippe Yvré in stede and place of the mayre of Tours, the citee, as now absent, to the whiche, at preyre of Blaunche Bruyn, bi-knowinge hir-self that she is now a nonne in the covent of Mount-Carmel, by name of suster Clara, we have wissed the chalange

chalange to goddes juggement by thilke prisounere charged of feendly possessioun and hir profre to stonde to the ordal of water and fyr in presence of the chapitre and the peple of Tours wher-by she sholde bi-telle hir rightes of wyfhode and hir innocence.

Assented arn to this requeste, on hir syde, thilke accusours whiche that, in as muchel as the citee pursueth, have undertaken to dresse a covenable scaffold in som place approved with the god-fadres of prisounere.

Thanne by us, juge, was set as for day, the firste of newe yere, the whiche shal be this nexte Estre-day; and we have height the tyde of midday at-after masse, the partyes being y-fallen at oon that this delay it is suffisaunt.

Ther-fore shal the present ordinaunce ben forth y-cryed at the diligence of everich thurgh-out the tounes, boroughes and castelles of Toureyne and of the reaume of Fraunce, at hir owene requeste, gyse and cost.

JEROME CORNILLE.

THAT WHICH THE SUCCUBUS DIDE FOR SOUKINGE FORTH OF THE SOULE OF THE OLDE JUGE AND WHER BICOM THIS FEENDLY DELYT

THIS is the proces of the laste confessioun doon in the firste daye of the monethe of Marche of the yere oo thousand and two hundred sevenety and oon after the come of oure blessed saveour by Jerome Cornille, preest,

preest, chanoun of the chapitre of the cathedrale of Seynt-Maurice, heigh penitauncer, though, god wot, unworthy of al.

Which that, in his laste ende, beten of his sinnes, trespasses, misdedes and harlotryes, hath wisshed his confessiouns ben shewed forth, as for pupplisshing of the sothe, glorie of godde and rightwisenesse of bisshoppes court and for doinge bote on his bale in the nexte worlde.

This ilke Jerome Cornille lyinge in his deth bedde, they have been called togider to heren him, John of the Haye (de Haga), vicáry of the chirche of Seynt Maurice, Peter Guyard, tresourere of the chapitre, y-set by oure louerd John of Monsoreau, erchebisshop, to wryte forth his wordes; thanne, daun Lowis Pot, monk of majus monasterium (Marmoutier), taken by him un-to his goostly fader and confessour; alle three attended with the heighe and worshipfulle doctour William of Censoris, romayn erchedeken, as nouthe in oure diocyse, y-sent (legatus) from oure holy fader the pope.

Finaly, by sighte of fele Cristene, y-come to witnessen the laste deeth of thilke Jerome Cornille, up-on his wisshe to doon solempne repentaunce, as he deyeth by lenten and his wordes may opene the eres of sinneres in weye to helle.

And, in presence of him, Jerome, which that, for greet wayknesse, ne mighte nat speke, hath

hath daun Lowis Pot, red the followinge confessioun to greet amoevinge of the congregacioun:

My brethre, as yet in-to this yere nyn-and-sevenetithe of myn elde, thilke in that ich am, but-if that it only be the smale sinnes of whiche, how holy so he be, a cristen agilt to god-ward, and that it leveful is him to bye ayein with penitence, I have lad, as to my dome, a cristen lyf and ben able to good name and loos in this diocyse wher-as I was enhaunced to the worshipfulle offyce of heigh penitauncer, to which ich am al unworthy. But now, fered for th' infinite glorie of godde, agast of the cruel peynes that awayte the wikke and caitifs in helle, have I thought to amenusen the wighte of my felonyes by the moste penaunce I mighte in this, my laste ende. Wher-fore have I impetred of holy chirche, whos rightes and fair name I have falsed, bitraysed and yeven a-weye, the privilege to shryve me openly, as after old-tyme Cristene. I wolde fayn, for gretter amendement, have yet lyf y-nough to stonde in the chirche porche, bar-fot, cursed of my brethre, a taper in honde and corde aboute my nekke, for I have faste folwed mis-wanderinges of helle ayeins the holy service of godde.

But yet, by this grete wrak of my brotel vertue, so be it un-to you a lore to weyve sinne and brikes of Sathanas and take refut in holy chirche ther al hele is. And, for I was bounde

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by Lucifer, so wis oure Drighte Jesus-Crist, thurgh you alle whos preyeres and helpes I clayme, have mercy up-on me, povre mis-lyved cristen whos eyen wolde to watre. So hadde I anouther lyf to leye forth in werkes! See now, herkneth ye and quaketh for greet fere: Chosen, I, by the chapitre assembled, for purpos to dighten, here forth and devyse the pletinge on honde up-on the feend sent uppe under womannish shap, as she that is a recreaunt, foul and mis-bileved nonne, y-clept Zulma in the hethene londe of which she is born, the whiche devel, knowen in the diocyse by name of Clara, of the nonnerye of Mount Carmel, hath sore greved the toun in bringinge under hir an infinit noumbre of men, so for to tye hir soules to Mammon, Astaroth and Sathanas, princes of helle, in sendinge men out of the worlde in estaat of dedly sinne and in revinge hem from lyf ther-as lyf bi-geten is, ich am, my-self, juge, fallen late in-to this snare and am went out of my witte in mis-usinge the office bi-taken in greet affiaunce by the chapitre to my colde age. Lo, herkneth how crafty is the devel and beth ware of his gyles.

As that I herde the firste answere of the forseyde succubus, I was agast for seeing how the yrens aboute hir hondes and feet ne leften no traas; and thus was I ravisshed on hir strengthe withinne-forth and hir wayknesse withoute-forth. Anon, my minde was ful of this

this feendes perfecciouns. I gan herknen the dreem of hir voys that hette me from heed to fote and dide me wisshe I were yong for to caste me to hir, weninge, myn everlastinge blisse nadde been but litel wages for an houres delyt in swiche fetys armes. Ther-upon, I putte a-wey the stedfastnesse juges oughte. This ilke feend, apposed by me, wond me in swiche wordes, my herte me bar utterly, I sholde don a cryme in tormentinge so sely a thing that weep as it were a sinnelees child.

Thanne, werned by a voys on heigh to do my duetee; and that thise gilden wordes, this musyke hevenliche in seminge, were pleyes of enchauntement; that this fayre forme wolde wende in-to a lither, bristled beste with sharpe clawes; hire softe eyen in-to helle brondes; hir croupere in-to a roynous tayl, and hir goodly, rosy-lippede mouth in-to cocadrilles jawes, turned ich ayein to my rather purpos for to pyne thilke succubus til that she confessed hir werkes, as custume is cristene juges to doon.

As this feend, lo, shewed hir-self naked for to ben put to torture, I sodeynly was brought under hir might by magyke spelle-wordes. I felte craken myne olde bones, my brayn fonged inne hoot light; myn herte was floded of yong and boyling blood; I wex happy in my corâge; and, by the charmes smiten in my sighte, the snowes of my forheed to-molten. I took no kepe of my cristen lyf; wel wende I have been a truant boy, skipping by feeldes and pikinge apples.

apples. No power hadde I to make o signe of the croys, and I remembred me neyther of holy chirche, ne of godde, ne of the meke saveour of man-kinde. Al in this moede, I rayked by stretes, thenkinge on the melodye of thilke voys, the abhominable body fair of thilke feend which that dropped thousand foule wordes in-to myn ere. Even thanne, haried and drawen by the develes flesh-hook, stiked in myn heed as sikel in an oke, was I gyded forth by this kene steel to gayle-warde nought with-stondinge my goode aungel that, tyme and tyme, plighte me by the elbowe and wered me ayeins swiche fondinges; but, nat for al his holy reed, I was pulled hider and thider with milliouns of clucches set in-to myn herte and fond my-self rathe in the gayle. As the dore was opned un-to me, lo, me thoughte I saugh no more semblaunce of a prisoun, for the succubus hadde, by helping of elves or fayëryë, arrayed a bour sprad with purpre and silk, ful of swete odours and floures, ther-as she desportede hir in goodly a-tyre with-oute yrens aboute hir nekke, ne fetres aboute hir fete. I lete me strepen of my vestiments of religioun and bathen in a savoured bath. Thanne, dide heo me on a sarsinnesshe vesture and sette me before a diner of curious mete and wynes of Asye in vessels of golde, whyl that wonder songes, minstralcy and preysinges a thousand tiklede me aboute the soule thurgh myne eres. Bi-syde me stood, al this tyme, thilke

thilke succubus and hir swete felawshipe hateful gan distille newe gledy desyrs in my limmes. My beter aungel for-lafte me. Thanne, livede I with the awefulle glare of the eyen of the morisca. I foundede for to clippe in hoot embracinge hir fetys body, I thirsted to sippe at hire rosene lippes, as I wende they were of kinde, and nought was I agast of the bytinge of hire teeth that drowe me in-to the depes of helle.

I was fayn to taste the macchelees softenesse of hire fingres, ne nevere me thoughte they nere but drasty clawes. At o worde, I was fresh as a bryd-gome forth til his bryd; I took non hede that this bryd was the dedly night. I maked no fors of the wele of myne evenecristenes ne of the intresse of godde; me dremed but of fals love, of the goodly pappes of this womman that dide me brenne and of hir helle gate in at which I maddede for to sterte. Allas, my brethre, by three dayes and three nightes, constreined was I to swinke; the streem ne mighte I with-holde that wellede of my lendes on whiche sette the succubus hire hondes lyke a peire dartes, dightinge my pore olde age and dryed bones with I not what swet of love.

At erste, this feend, for to drawe me un-to hir, poured in-to me a milk swetnesse; next, comen anguisshinge delices that stongen, as it were nedles a hundred, un-to my bones, marwe, brayn and sinewes. Thanne, at this desporte, caughte

caughte al thing fyr: the streite sete of my thought, my blood, nerves, flesh and bones; in a whyle, I brende of the verray fyr of helle; I was pyned with elf-shottes aboute my joyntes and an outrageous, aking, sykening delyt that slaked the brideles of my lyf. The heres of this feend in whiche my povre body was envóluped, helden on me a fyry blast and I felte ech tresse as a barre of hoot yren. In this dedly plesaunce, saugh I hir glowinge face that lough and glosed me thousand likerous wordes, as, I was hir knight, hir lord, hir spere, hir dayes light, hir joye, hir thonder-bolt, hir lyf, hir gode, hir beste ryder; and that she hadde minde for to wrappe hir in me yet bet, so mighte heo crepe in-to my skinne, or I in hires. The whiche as I herde, for the prikking of thilke tunge that souked forth my soule, I sank and strook forth-ward, dounere and dounere un-to helle, ne mighte I nevere touche the ground. Thanne, whanne I hadde nat a drope of blood in veynes, whan my soule clevede no mo to my body, whanne I was clene over-throwen, the feend me seyde, evere fresh, cleer, a-glowe, shene and laughinge:

—Povre fole, thou that me wenest a feend. Ha! Yif I bade thee selle thy soule for a kis, woldestow nat so with glad herte?

—Yis, quod I.

—And yif, for to swinke thus ever-more, nede were that thou fedde thee of blood of newe-born babes, so that thou hadde alwey newe lyf

to

to skinke in my bed, woldestow nat fayn souke of it?

—Yis, quod I.

—Yif, for to ben rydinge in thy chevauchee, ever blythe as a wight in his blowinge-tyme, haboundinge in lyf, drinkinge delyt, plounginge in-to the depes of joye, as a swimmere dooth in Loyre, ne woldestow nat reneye god, ne woldestow nat bi-spete th' imáge of Jesus?

—Yis, quod I.

—Yif twenty yeer of cloyster lyf were yet graunted thee, ne woldestow nat sette hem for two yeer of this hote fyr and for to flikkere in this mery moevinge?

—Yis, quod I.

And her-with-al, I felte hundred sharpe clawes that tare me thurgh the mid-rif as it were hundred bekes of briddes of praye, pekkinge and janglinge. Thanne, at a stert, was I whirled uppe, above the erthe up-on thilke succubus, which that spradde hir wenges a-brood and seyde:

—Worth uppe, my ryder, ryd forth! hold thee faste on the croper of thy mere, on hire heres and hir hals, and ryd, ryd forth my chivachour. Lo! al thing rit.

Ther-with saugh I, as in a mist, the citees of the erthe ther-as, by an especial yifte, I bi-heeld ech man repeiringe til other femele feend, overlepinge and engenderinge in greet lust, shrykinge wordes of love and alleskinnes

othes,

othes, and alle knit togider, y-clenched and strugling.

Thanne, my mere with a mores heed, shewede me, so forth fleeinge and prauncinge thurgh the skyes, erthe y-coupled with sonne by a conjoyninge whennes out-brosten erratik sterres; and ech femele world was falling in joye to-gider with hir make. Ac, in stede of wordes of mouth, thise ilke worldes blastede forth oure tempestes, shotte lighteninges and claterede thonder-clappes. Thanne, soringe alwey uppere above the worldes, saugh I the goddesse of kinde in love with the prince of mocioun. As in scorn, lo, the succubus me sette amiddes thilke dredfulle, everlastinge sweigh wher I was lost as a greyn of sonde by the see. There, ever among, my whyte mere me seyde:

"Ryd, ryd, my gode chevachour, ryd forth! al thing rit."

Now, thenkinge me how lytel was a preest in this sterne streme of sede to worldes, ther-as ever-mo felawshiped and clunge togider in ful furie metals, stones, watres, windes, wederes, fisshes, plauntes, bestes, men, goostes, worldes, planetes, I forswoor the general feyth. Ther-whyles, she, shewinge me thilke sterry galaxyë up-on the firmamaunt, tolde me hit was a drope of sede celestial scaped of a flode of worldes conjoyned. Up-on this, I madly bistrood the succubus by lighte of o thousand millioun sterres, and, so doing, I hadde fayn felt al the wyse,

wyse, right of thilke thousand millioun of creatures. Lo, by this laste assay of love, I wex deed as stoon after I had herd a loud, infernal laughtre. Thanne, fond I me in bed, compassed by my servauntz whiche, with ful greet stryf, hadde fought with the devel, yetinge in-to my bedde a boket-ful of holy water and callinge faste to godde. In mene whyles, for al this help, me thurfte bere grisly bataille with thilke succubus whos clawes gryped me aboute the herte, causinge me throwes with-oute ende. Al be it so that, quikked ayein with voys of servauntz, kinrede and freendes, I enforced me to doon the holy signe of the croys, she, sete up-on my bed-syde, at the heed, feet, ay-where, bisied hir to unstrenge my nerves, laughinge, grenninge, settinge bifore myne yën thousand likerous imáges and in-blowinge in me thousand yvele desyrs. Ther-with, th' erchebisshop rewed up-on me and leet fecche the relikes of Seynt Gacien and, at his touching of the beddes heed, thilke goblyn was flemed, levinge bi-hynde smel of brimstoon and helle; of which cherles, freendes and outhere quakkede a ful day longe.

By this, goddes light lightinge my soule, I gessed that, for my sinnes and fight with the evyl spirit, I was in shadwe of dethe. I ther-fore preyede of mercy especial to live forth a litel stounde, so I mighte preyse god and his chirche, objectinge th' infinite merytes of Jesus, that

that deyde on rode for soules of cristene. By this preyre, I fond strengthe to shewe my sinnes, to craven of my brethere of Seynt Maurice chirche of hir helpes and socours so that I be delivered out of purgatorie wher ich am in point to bye ayein my giltes with endelees pynes. Ferther-over, I seye, that myn ordinaunce by which this feend sholde be put to goddes juggement and til ordal of fyr and holy water is a queyntise suggested by the forseide feend, thurgh which he wolde out-go the justyse of court of the erchebisshop and chapitre, for-as-muchel as he me secreely discured, it liste him sende in his owene stede and lyknesse anouther feend harded to this ordal. Laste of al, I yeve and bi-quethe to the chapitre of Seynt Maurice chirche my moebles and thing, wher-with to wercche a chapel in thilke chirche, to timbre it, dighte and halwen under the tytles of Seynt Jerome and Seynt Gacien, as that oon is my patroun and that other the saveour of my soule.

This confessioun, herd of the assembly was leyd biforn the erchebisshoppes court by John of the Haye (Johannes de Haga).

We, John of the Haye (Johannes de Haga), chosen to heigh penitauncer of Seynt Maurice by the general meeting of the chapitre, after the use and custume of this chirche; and committed

mitted as for to procede of-newe in the plee of the succubus feend, as nouthe in the chapitre gayle, have ordeyned a newe enqueste in which shulle ben herd alle of this diocyse that ben conisaunt of thinges beringe ther-on.

We declaren to be voyde alle outhere processes, examininges and ordinaunces and bi-quasshe hem on bi-halve of the members of the chirche assembled in a general and sovereyn chapitre; and we finde that noon appeel to godde, swich as was slyly maad by thilke feend, ne lyth heer, bi-cause of the develes fals trecherie in this caas.

And this ordinaunce shal ben openliche y-cryed in the places of the diocyse ther were publiced the false juggements of last monthe, alle dewe, as it is notáble, to the feendes abet, as sheweth by the confessioun of Jerome Cornille, that is deed.

So stonde alle Cristene by holy chirche, and herkne un-to hire commaundements.

JOHN OF THE HAYE.

HOW SHE SKIPTE SO LIGHT, THE MORISCA OF HOOT STRETE, THAT WITH MUCHE PEYNE WAS SHE BRENT AND Y-SCALDED AL QUIK IN DESPYT OF HELLE

Writen in the monthe of May of the yere 1360 as in gyse of testament.

" My right dere sone, whan that thou rede this,

I shal be grave, bi-sechinge so preye thou for me and governe thee as it is put forth in this lettre, bi-quethen to reule of thyn hous, his prow and sikernesse; for, at writing of it, my minde and inward sight were fresshe smiten with the sovereyn injustice of men. Whanne I com to mannes estaat, I longed to ryse up to the moste dignitees in holy chirche for, as to me, ther nere no worthier lyf; in which heigh thought, I lerned to rede and wryte and, with moche peyne, me scoled in clergie. But, for-as-mochel as I hadde no wys gye to bringe me forth, I hadde the engyn to profre me for scriveyn, notary and clerk of the chapitre of Seynt Martin, in which were the nobleste and welthieste of cristendom: the king is there but playn chanoun. In thilke office, lo, oughte I best finde enchesoun to doon lordes servyse and, so forth, gete me maysteres, thanne, with hir favour and procuring, to take holy ordre, com by a mytre as any other and, atte laste, styen up to an erchebisshoppes see, I ne roughte where. But swich ambicious mocioun was more than I mighte doon as god wel shewede; for, sir John Villedomer, sithen cardinal, was put in that office and I, laft bi-hynde and cast aweye. In this harde stounde, myn herte was esed thurgh conseil of olde, povre Jerome Cornille, penitauncer of the cathedrale, of whom I yow often tolde. So spak he benignly, he leet me come take penne for the chapitre of Seynt Maurice chirche, the

whiche I dide faire, for I was knowe fer and wyde as for a scriveyn.

In the yere I was aboute to take ordre, happed the notáble proces of the feend of Hoot Strete, which eldres yet remembre, tellinge children at even-tyde thilke tale that whylom y-herd was in homes of Fraunce. Lo, my gode mayster, as he thoughte it were to my prow and that the chapitre for myn hyre wolde sette me toward som office, he forth dide me endyten al that were, in this heighe caas, matere of to wryte.

With the firste, daun Jerome Cornille, a man of wisdom, fairnesse and goodly thewes, drawing neigh eightety yeer, hadde suspect of som falshede.

Al lykede him nat wommen foles of hir body and al hadde he never layn by non in his lyve that was holy and venerable, for which he was elect to juge, yet so, right as witnesses and prisounere were herd, it stood clere that, though this mery wantown had y-broke hir nonnerye, giltelees was she from any develrye, but that hir richesse was coveited of hir enemys and some that I kepe not to nevene. In thilke tyme, it was seyd that, she was astored of gold and silver swich plentee, she mighte bye the countee of Toureyne; and ther-fore ronnen up-on hir lesinges and bak-bytinge wordes, from envye of rightwyse wommen, bi-cominge gospel sothes.

Among

Among al this, sir Jerome Cornille, al so sone as he was aknowe that no feend nas in thilke but that oon of love, dide hir vouche sauf to dwellen in a nonnerye, terme of hir lyf. Thanne, acerteyned by somme brave knightes hardy in werre and riche of demeines that they wolde doon al hir might hir for to rescowe, he tolde hir prively to cleyme the juggement of godde, yevinge the chapitre hir goodes wher-by to stoppen wikke tonges. Thus sholde be sauved fro the fyr th' alder-faireste flour that ever heven leet fallen in oure erthe, the whiche sely flour of wommanhede ne nevere fayled but in over muche rewthe and pitee on the love-longinge cast with hir eyen in woweres hertes.

But the verray devel in monkes shap entremeted him of thilke cas: thus it was: som greet enemy of sir Jeromes vertue, prudence and holynesse, y-clept John of the Haye, whan he wiste how was the pore gerl used in gayle as a quene, shrewedly bar the penitauncer on honde that he treted with hir and was hir servaunt, by cause, seyde this false preest, she maked him yong, lusty and gladsom; of al which, the olde, pore greye deyede on a day of brosten herte, knowinge how wilned John of the Haye to shende him for his dignitee. And so bifel, oure lorde erche-bisshop soughte the gayle and fond the sarasene wenche lyinge softe in a wel-arayed chaumbre; for she had hyd a dyamaunt ther-as noon sholden a-grope and

and y-bought the gayleres clemence. In this tyme, seyde somme that this ilke gayler as he lovede hir or, bet, as he fered this wommanes yonge barouns, was castinge on hir flighte. The goode man Cornille was up poynt to deye, and the chapitre, by wissinge of John of the Haye, wende it bihoved to cutten awey the heigh-penitaunceres enditements and ordinaunces. Thilke John of the Haye, tho pleyn vicary of the heved-chirche shewed how, for doing of this, it were y-nough a solempne confession of the gode man in his deeth-bedde. Thanne, was pyned and baited the deedly man by messires of the chapitre, tho of Seynt Martin, tho of Marmoustiers, by the erchebisshoppe and eek the popes legate, for that he retractede him to bote of holy chirche. But he nolde for longe tyde. Yet, after mochel wo, was greythed his laste confessioun, witnessed of the moste men of the toun: it scatered swich horrour and drede, can ich it nat tellen. The chirches of the diocyse made processioun as for som cruel scourge and everich was adrad lest the devel droppede adoun in his house thurgh the chimenee. Sooth is, my gode mayster Jerome was sweynt of mochel fevere; and him semede as were kyn in his chaumbre the whyles thilke retraccioun was y-wronge from him. Whan over-blowen was thilke hoot fit, the povre seynt bitterly weep as he wissed was of the wikke wrenche. In th' ende, he deyede in myne armes seyinge, he was goinge to

to falle un-to goddes feet and bi-seche him lette so woful a mis.

Thilke morisca hadde maked him rewe up-on hir teres of repentaunce. For, er she cleymed goddes juggement, he hadde prively shriven hir, unwrapping a soule of which he spak as a diamaunt worthy, after penaunce and deeth, to the shyninge corone of godde. And thanne, lefe sone, knowinge by wordes of folk and sely answeres of thilke pore womman the sothe of al, shoop I, with th' avys of mayster Fraunceys Hangest, fysicien to the chapitre, to feyne syknesse and leve the servyse of Seynt Maurices chirche and th' erchebisshoppe; I nolde deye myne hondes in innocent blood that cryeth stille, and shal, til heigh domesday, god biforn. Tho was put out the gayler and, in his stede, y-set the tormentoures seconde sone, which caste the morisca in a derke celle and cruel, putte aboute hir a woden girdel forth with yrens of fifty pound wighte to hir hondes and feet. Afterward, the gayle was wacched with th' arblasters of the toune and th' erchebisshoppes men. The prisounere was tormented and pyned; hir bones were brosten. Overcomen with suffering, she maked a confessioun to the talent of John of the Haye and was ther-upon dampned ben brent in Seynt Stevenes close, after that she hadde stonden in the chirche porche weringe on a soulfred serke; and, ther-to, hir goodes were escheted to the chapitre, *et caetera.*

This

This dome fil to mochel tene and pris of armes thorough-out the toun. First, three bacheleres of Tours sworen to deye in the pore gerles servyce and to rescowe hir by alle menes. Thanne, comen they in-to toun with poraille, swinkers, olde sodiours, men of werre, prentyses and outhere wel a thousand whiche she hadde sauved from harme, hungre and shame. Lo, they serchede the hoveles for mo of hir noumber; and alle arisen and gaderede hem to-gider atte fote of Mount-Lowis under the yemen of thilke bacheleres. Thider comen, eek, the gadelinges of fourty myle aboute and, on a morwe, they bi-leyde the erchebisshoppes prisoun, cryeinge out to have the morisca, as mente they to doon hir to dethe. But, in effect, they hadde cast to delivere hir, putten on horse and stelen aweye, for she rood as a yeman. Lo, in this roringe tempest bitwene th' erchebisshoppes buildinges and the brigges, ther swarmed, as we sawe, ten thousand men and mo, with-oute tho that seten on thacches and clomben on flores for to see the stryf. Biyonde Loyre, it were esy to here, to that other syde of Seynt-Symphorien, the horrible shoutes of the cristene, forth to rejoye in the sighte, and of outhere aboute the gayle set to leten out the pore wenche. Swich was the crowding and swarming of this lewd multitude athirst of that womman, on knees biforn whom they wolde have fallen hadde they haply seen hir, that sevene children, eleven wommen and eighte

eighte burgeyses were troden under fote, to-quasshed til men knewe nat hir bodyes, they were lyk mukke-hepes. At o word, so wyde gapede the huge jowes of this poeplish Leviathan grisly, his clamour rong un-to Montilly-bisyde-Tours. Men creyde: "To the dethe with the mare!—*Baillez ça* the feend!—Ha, ha!—I wol have oon of hir quarters!—I wol have the heres!—Myne shul be the feet!—Thyne the bristles!—Lat me have the heed!—Me, the *bele chose!*—Is it rede?—Shul we seen it?" Everich seyde his word. But th' ascry: "A larges, larges to godde!—To the dethe with the mare!" was yelled of oo voys among the prees, so thikke and breme, it ròòf myn herte and eres; ne coude I scarsly here the roringe of folk at windowes.

The erchebisshop bi-thoughte him, for slakinge of this storm that thretede dryve every thing doun, to comen forth solempnly of chirche, caryinge god, the whiche sauved the chapitre hous fro ruyne, for the gadelinges and lordinges hadde sworen to tere it doun and brenne, and slee the chanouns. Lo, by this mene, the peple were maad to departe and, for lakke of vitaille to goon hoom. Thanne, the covents of Toureyne, the lordes and comunes, in mochel fere of pilage on the nexte day, they sette a parlement by night and fillen at oon with the chapitre. By hir cure, the men at armes, arblasters, knightes and burgeyses, a ful greet route, slowe an heep of roveres, truants,

truants, micheres whiche, wissed that they were of al this hote fare at Tours, comen hider and gadrede hem to-gider with the rebelles. Lord Harduin of Maillé, an old noble man, bi-spak the bacheleres, merie-men of the morisca and shewede wyse skiles, askinge whether as for a wantoun womman, they wolde leye wast Toureyne; whether, al hadde they the beste, they mighten holde in honde the loreles they hadde hem-selven reysed; the whiche, whan that they hadde destroyed hir enemys castelles, wolde torne up-on hir owene lederes. But, so as the rebellion hadde fared amis right in the beginning and the stretes were now clered, how coude they yet hope to overcomen the chirche of Tours which wolde take help of the king? And, thus he heeld forth. Ayeins thise resouns, replyede the bacheleres that ethe it were the chapitre to leten out the womman by night, and al cause of stryf sholde cesse. To thilke wyse and mannish requeste, daun William di Censoris, the popes legate, seyde: maystrie moste abyde with holy chirche in al wyse. Ther-with-al, the pore morisca payede for every thing sithen that it was acorded, non enqueste ne sholde nat be maad as anentes the rebellion.

Thanne mighte the chapitre putten forth th' execucioun of the juggement; and folk come from a thritty myle-wey aboute to this religious acte and forme. So, up-on the day the succubus sholde ben bi-taken un-to seculer

seculer justyse for to be brent in open, ne for a pound of golde nadde a vileyn ne an abbot found a logging in citee. On the night next bifore, manye layen in feeldes under teldes or in stree. Vitaille was short and tho that comen with a ful stomak tornede ayein empty: they sawe brenninge of the fyr but from afer. Thanne, the pilours deden bisinesse by the heye-weyes.

The povre lemman nas but deed and hir heer was y-woxe whyt. To telle certeyn, she nas but fel and bones: hir yrens weyede more than she. If so were she hadde joye in lyf, she aboughte it dere now. They that sawe hir for-by passe, seyde she weep and shryked to doon routhe to hir wrathfulleste enemys. For-why, in chirche, nede was to stoppen hir mouth with a calves-skinne which she gnow as an efte gnaweth on a stikke. And heer-upon, the tormentour tyed hir til a stake to stayen hir uppe, for so wayk was she, she somwhyles syed and droped doun. Thanne, at a stert, quikked she eft; for, as it telleth, she sodeynly slipped hir bondes and clomb spakly, in minde of hir rather crafte, to the arches above, flyinge as a brid endelong the pinacles and kerved imageries. She was aboute to out-fleen over the roof, whan an archeer shet at hir and stikked hir ancle. Maugree hir foot y-maymed, the povre byrde gan lepende yet thurgh the chirche, rennende on hir broken bone, lesende blood, so sore a-grisen was she of the lemes of the

the fyr. Atte laste, was she caught, bounde, throwen in a carte and brought to brenninge; no man herde hir after shryken. The tale how she scaped fro the chirche, halp lewed folk bileve she were the devel, and somme seyde she sayled a-weye thurgh the eyr. As that the toun tormentour shoof hir in-to the fyr, she leep two or three horrible lopes and fil in the stakke that brente a day and night longe.

Up-on the morwe, wente I me for to seen whe'r ther aught bi-lafte of this brighte childe, so gente and lufsom; but I fond nought, save a thinne remenaunt of a stomak-bone in which, nat for the mochel fyr, ther shewede som moisture; and somme seyde, it flikkerede yet as womman in deduyt. Me list nat telle, dere sone, the tribulaciouns with-oute noumbre secounde un-to none that, wel by ten yeer, disesede me. The deeth of this sely childe shent with wikkede men sat hevy on my soule; hir eyen fulfild of love shynede ever in my sighte and her aungellyke thewes were fresshe aboute me dayes and nightes. My wone it was to preyen in thilke chirche ther she was martered. Ne mighte I thenke of the heigh-penitauncer John of the Haye, but I quaked: he dyede up-freten with lys. Meselrie took wreche on the bailly; the hous and wyf of John, bothe were brent of fyr; and alle that caste the deeth of the pore womman were hem-self shent.

Of thise thinges muche thought I hadde which

which I have entered heer, to be for ay precepts of governement in oure house.

I for-lafte the servyse of holy chirche and took your moder to wyve, of whom I received endelees blisse; and, with hir, I partede lyf, goodes, soule and al. So that she was of my minde as of thise sentences. As: firste, if ye wole live happy, so kepe yow awey fro preestes and freres: honoure hem mochel, yet bringe hem nat in-to your hous, ne none swiche as arn holden, rightly or wrongly, that they ben oure bettres. Secounde, lerne a smal craft and plye it so that men never wene ye be riche at al. Take hede that ye ne reyse the envye of none, ne hurte none in no maner wyse, for he that wolde breste envyouse hedes, he sholde be strenger than an ook that is wont to quelle plantes aboute his rote. At this assay, ye sholde comen under, for manisshe okes ben fewe and no Tournebousche ne may crakke boost he be swich oon, for ne nevere shal he be naught elles but a Tournebousche. Thridde, ne nevere despende more than the ferthe partye of your rente, speke nat of your gode, kepe your chevisaunce clòòs, ne take on you noon office, go to chirche as folk doon and holde youre thoughtes with-inne, for than be they youres and not othre, that make hem hir owene, torne hem in-to cappes for neigheboures and sette in somme sclaunderouse bakbytinges. Ferthe, holde ay forth in the degree of the Tournebousches whiche arn draperes and evermore

evermore shullen. As lete youre doughtres wedden goode draperes and youre sones travayle wyde in Fraunce, techinge hem thise wyse preceptes to worshippe of wolle-craft and werninge hem from veyne-gloriouse thoughtes.

Clother as a Tournebousche: this devys oughte ben hir prys, sheeld, renoun and lyf. Right so, shulle they faren ever thriftily and al unknowen as esy litel wermes whiche boren forth holes in tree and saufly twyne hir threed to his ende. Fifte, ne nevere use none outhere termes but tho of clooth-making, ne dispute of divinitee ne of comune thinges. And yet that governoures of the reaume or the province, or elles religioun and god, sholde thinke to turne or winke to right halfe or to laft, natheless holde ye, being Tournebousche, to your clooth. Thus, un-knowen of any, shulle Tournebousches live in pees as eek hir litle Tournebouschinges, payinge tythes, taylages, and al they be bounde to yeven un-to king, toun or parisshe, with alle of whiche it were to avoyden stryf. And nedeth holde faste youre eldres gold-hord for to have pees, to bye you pees, to ben out of dette, to have fet bacoun in spence and murthe in your secree chaumbre.

In this wyse shulle none have no power over Tournebousches: nouther king ne holy chirche, ne lordes, to whiche laste up-on cas, if ye moste, ye may lene a fewe markes, yet hopeth nat after hem ayein: I mene the markes. Thus, by alle sesouns, shulle Tournebousches have blis

blis of love. Men shal wel mowe laughe at the Tournebousches, threpinge that ye be lewede, smal-foot and dulle: lat talke the foles; Tournebousches ne shullen nat be brent ne to-hanged for bote of king, holy chirche or outhere; and the wyse Tournebousches shulle prively have moneye in cheste and joye at hoom unespyed of alle. Wher-fore, dere sone, tak kepe what I telle of thinne, sparinge, lyflode, and whan thou parte fro this lyf, so lat thyn heir kepe forth thilke lore as holy writ of Tournebousches til un-to tyme god plese ther be no mo Tournebousches in erthe."

This lettre was founden in the liste of goodes endyted in the house of Fraunceys Tournebousche, lord of Veretz, chancellour of his heighnesse the Delfin, dampned, by thilke princes rebellioun that he were bi-heded and his goodes escheted, after an ordenaunce of the parlement of Paris.

Thilke lettre was y-take to the governour of Toureyne for storial curiositee and annexed to the rolles of the plee beforn th' erchebisshop of Tours by me, Peter Gaultier, shirreve and wardemote.

Th' autour, as he hadde finisshed the trewe writing and translating of thilke scriptures, torninge hem from hir straunge langage in-to frensshe, the man that bistowed hem tolde that "hoot strete" at Tours was thus nempned bicause, after somme, the sonne sit ther lenger than

than elles-wher. But, maugree this tale, men of heigh discrecioun wolde finde in the "hote weye" of the forseide succubus the verray cause of thilke name. Al this techeth us to usen oure body nat outrageously but by mesure, for oure savacioun.

PERSEVERAUNCE UN-TO LOVE

ABOUTE the firste yeres of the thrittethe hundred after the come of oure blessed saveour, bi-fel in Paris citee an aventúre of love, along on a man of Tours, of which merveylede tho of toune and eek of kinges court. As touchinge of the preesthode, ye shulle after see the partye they hadde in this storie wher-of, with hem, was conserved the record.

The whiche man, he was called the Tourangeau by the lyte folk, for he had taken his burthe in oure mery countree of Tours, and Anseau was his righte name. In-with his olde dayes, this gode man tornede him ayein thider and was lord of the maner of Seynt Martin, as telleth the croniques of the abbeye and the toun; but, at Paris, he was a worthy goldsmith. Now, in his quikke age, by fair deling, swink or otherweys, he roos uppe to burgeys and subgit of the king, whos protecciouN he boughte as wone was. A hous he hadde of his, built without any baillye, neigh to the chirche of Seynt Leu, in Seynt Denys strete, and his forge was wel couth of tho that soughte fayre jeweles.

Al were he a man of Tours and of lyve he hadde

hadde a plentee to spare, yet livede he in Paris clene as a seynt for any swete calles, and ne nevere in his gras-tyme trayled he his hosen in no stewe. Manye wole seye, swich thing passeth the power to bileve which god hath put in-with us wher-by to grounde the feyth we owe to holy chirche mistihedes. Wher-fore, nedeth kythe al oute the hyd cause of this chastetee of a goldsmith. But, first, tak this: he com on fote to toun, povrere than Job, as tolde th' olde craftesmen and, al the revers of folk of oure contree that ben as blase of straw, he was as steel of assay, holdinge his purpos stedfastly as a monkes vengeaunce. Of a werkman, he wroughte alday; mayster, he wroughte yet; day by day, lernede he newe secrees or soughte out receits and, sekinge, caste forth his devysinges.

Night-fareres, wacches or wantoun knaves were wont to seen a litel shimering of light in at the goldsmithes windowes and good goldsmith hameringe, kervinge, paringe, fylinge, smithinge in-fere with som prentys, with dores shet and eres openly sprad. Povertee maketh diligence, diligence maketh worthy wisdom and wisdom, woon of richesse. Marketh this, ye children of Caym, that eteth florins and droppeth but water. As ofte as the goode goldsmith hadde in-with him swiche gery desyrs as, heer and there, twiste a pore soleyn man whan the devel sheweth to beren him awey up-on a signe of the croys, he wolde bete his metal

metal and in-knitte the weywarde spirites in his brayn as he caste him to make thinges preciouse, amorettes craftily wrought, gaye silver images to slekke with his Venus anger. Put ther-to that this Tourangeau was a man of lowe shoon and playn understanding feringe god first, thanne theves, lordes, and tumulte most of al. Though he hadde two hondes, yit never dide he but oo thing at o tyme. Softe was his speche as bryd biforn the brydale and how so that preestes, men of armes and othre somme helden him nought of a clerk, algates spak he faire his moder leden with-oute at-do.

Thanne, after-ward, folk of Paris hadde him taught to gon up-right, nat to bete aboute no busshes for outhere, to mete out his passiounes by the yerde of his rente, nat to alowen no man to bi-nime his lether for makinge of shoo-thonges, to taken hede to the corn, nat to truste up-on liddes of boistes, nat to seye what that he dide but to doon that he seyde, nat to lete drope nought elles but water, to have more memorie than, in general partye, gnattes han, to kepe his peyne un-to him-self and eek his moneye-box, nat to kyken on the skies by stretes and to selle jeweles derere than they coste; alle thinges, the wyse seweinge wher-of yaf him wisdom as muche as nedeth to selle esiliche and happiliche. Thus dide he with-oute anoy to none; and manye, bi-holdinge thilke gode, esy man with him-self seyde: " In feyth, me luste ben as this goldsmith, how so

were that I moste treden up to knees in dong of Paris by an hundred yeer." As wel mighte swiche folk have wisshed to ben king of Fraunce, for this goldsmith hadde mighty armes square, brauny, y-herd, and so harde and stronge that, when he clenched his festes, a peire pinceours handled with the craftes man of most strengthe had nat opened hem. Over this, he hadde teeth with whiche to chewe yren, a stomak to resolve it, a chiterling to defye and a gut to doon it wey with-oute skathe; thanne, sholdres up-on whiche he mighte up-holde the world, after th' ensaumple of that payen lord ordeyned whylom un-to this, whom Jesus Cristes come hath, in good tyme relesed. He was, sooth to seyn, oon of tho men cast at o throwe, the whiche ben the stalworthieste, for what man that nedeth amenden, he nis nought worth, thus peced up and built by sondry tymes. At o worde, was he a stronge man store, with visage of a leoun, under whos browes brast out a lokinge to melte gold if fyr of forge lakked; but a cleer water put in his eyen by th' atemprere of alle thing akeled this grete ardour, for elles he hadde brent up every thing. Nas it nat a passing man?

Up-on this monstre of his cardinals vertus, men mighte aske, why so the gode goldsmith stood unwedded as any oystre, sin that graces of kinde ben of fair usage in alle places. But this jalouse accusours, witen they what loving is? Ho, fy! The office of lovyere is to come,

go,

go, liste, wacche, holde his pees, lye lowe, swelle him-self, coure, shrinke to nought; assente, singe, tholie, renne for the devel wher he is, trye seed-pesen on a bord, finde floures under snow, seye pater nostres to the mone, acoye the hoomly cat and dogge, saluen freendes, speke wel of the auntes goute or chille and seyn til hir goodly: "Your face shyneth brighte and ye shulle wryte th' epitaphe of man-kinde."

Thanne, sholde ye be redy to plese alle the kinrede, nat to trede on no mannes feet ne to breste glases; ye sholde ben able to sho greshoppes, wasshe tyles, talke of no-thing, holde ys in honde, wondren up-on babeles and crye out: "It is wel!" or: "verraily, ma dame, ye seme ful brighte in this gyse"; and so forth, dyversen this note of oon hundred thousand maners. Thanne, sholde a lovyere kembe his lokkes and make him gaye as a lord, speke with a redy, yet war, tunge; he sholde drye in laughinge alle the mischeves the devel worketh; he sholde lette his yre, brydle his desyr, have the finger of god and tayl of the dragoun; he sholde yeve the moder presents, yeve the cosin, the servaunt; at o word, he sholde alwey make greet cheer of affeccioun, elles the femele astert awey and cast you clene out of hir grace with-oute assigninge of oo singuler cristen cause.

Laste of al, how so be the lovyere of the moste clement womman god evere maked in a merie fit, yit hadde spoken as a book of wis-

dom,

dom, hopped as a flee, sponnen aboute as a dee, pleyed musyke as king David, daunced the hundred thousand caroles of helle and built for thilke forseyde the corinthian ordre of the develes pilers, yit for al that, if he ben out of that oon sengle poynt held secree, plesinge to his lady, that ofte sythes she knoweth nat hir-self but that him oughte knowen, the wight weyveth him as it were a red lepre. She is in the ordre of right and men may nought appose ther-to. In this mis-hap, somme bi-comen sorwefulle, elenge, angry more than yow can thinke. Ye, somme had hem-selven for-doon for thilke torninge aboute of a smok. As of this thing, man departeth him fro bestes, sin that none ne han lost hir wittes for desespeir of love; the whiche sheweth that dombe bestes ne han no soule. The office of lovyere is, ther-fore, a note of minstral, hyreling, quakke, timbestere, prince, fool, king, slogard, monk, ape, ryotour, lyer, boost-craker, clawe-bak, moppe, labbe, jakke-of-apes, cherl, shrewe; a craft that Jesus weyvede and that folk of heigh entente holde, after him, in leest reverence; a craft for hauntinge of which a hardy man is, over alle thing, bounden to yelde his tyme, lyf, blood, beste wordes, as wel as his herte, soule and brayn, to which femeles be cruelly likerous, bi-cause that, fro thennes-forth that hir tunge clappe they seye ech til other that, and they gete nat of a man every thing, they ne geten no-thing. Ye, ther be she-apes that knette

knette hir browes and chide yit, al be that a man have set the world on sixe and sevene for hir sake, by so they finde out whe'r ther ben an eighteth, for in alle thing they wilne more, swich appetyt have they to conqueste and tirannye. And this heighe custume hath ben stille holden in Paris, ther wommen take more salt in hir cristening than any-wher elles and, for-thy, are slye even fro hir burthe.

And wher-fore, the goldsmith, al-day y-set a-werke at his shoppe, burninge gold and hetinge silver, nat coude enchaufen love, ne burne ne illumine fantasyes, ne aparaile him and dryve awey tyme with apes gaudes, ne gon after an ingot with a peyre eres. Now, so as in Paris maydes ne usen to fallen in-to bacheleres beddes no more than rosted pecokes in stretes, al if swiche bacheleres be royals goldsmithes; al-so the Tourangeau commendably kepte a newe popet in his sherte. Nat for-thy, he ne mighte nat be blind to the kindely yeftes that enhaunseden ladyes (and eke wyves) with whiche he cheped his jeweles. And, ofte sythes, after he hadde herd the whyte wordes of wommen that him helden in hande and curriede for to kecche som swete thing, the gode Tourangeau repeired ayein hoom by stretes, musinge as a poet, for-lorn more than a nestelees cukkow, seyinge: "Ich oughte chese me a wyf. She wolde swepe the floor, kepe disshes hote, folde up shetes, mende me, singe blithely, fonde me to doon in the house

house at hir moste likinge and seyen, as they alle doon whan they longe for a jewel: 'Lo, swete, loke, is it nat fetis?' And any in the place of the toun, seeinge hir, wolde thinke up-on me: 'Bi-holde a happy man!'"

And, in his minde, he took his bryd to chirche, maked the mariage festes, pampred dame goldsmith, greythed hir in fyne clothes, yaf hir a golden cheyne, lovede hir from heed to fote, yaf the hous un-to hir hold, though nat the moneye-bagges, bi-stowed hir in his chaumbre above, wel glased, strowed of russhes, bi-honged of tapites, with a wonder wardrobe; leyde hir in an over-brood bed with twiste pilers and curtins of citryn sendal hewe; he boughte hir joly mirours and hadde alwey children aboute, wel a ten, of hir and of him, whan as he com hoom.

But, there, wyf and children vanisshede in-to hameringes; he forshoop his malencolyke swevenes in curious images and shifted thoughtes of love in-to merie jeweles with whiche were wel plesed his custumeres; they niste nat how manye wyves and children were lost in werkes of goldsmithrie. And the more that the goode man sette his talent up-on his art, the more he was doun-cast. Now, nadde god rewed on him, forth were he agoon out of this erthe and hadde nat wist what was love, how so be he mighte have knowen in next oon, but for the forshaping of the flesshe that forsluggeth it, so as telleth daun Plato, a man of auctoritee

auctoritee but, for-as-muchel as he never was cristen, hath erred. Allas! thise prologes ben ydele disgressiouns and gloses wher-with mis-creaunts doon a man bi-winden a tale as a child in cradel-clothes, whyl him oughte renne aboute naked al. Lat the grete devel stikke hem with his treble, reed flesh-hook! I wol go to my tale with-oute double-wordes.

Now, this is that bifel un-to the goldsmith in the yere fourty and oon of his age. Up-on a lordes day, walkinge over the southe syde of Seyne, he gan wander, driven by a thoughte of mariage, in-to the lese that after-ward y-clept was Clerkes Mede, which that was tho in the lordshipe of the abbeye of Seynt-German and nat of th' universitee. There, ever walking, the Tourangeau fond him in the feeld and mette with som povre mayde which, takinge hede of his aray and chere, grette him, seyinge: "God see you, my lord." And so spak hir voys with hertly swetnesse that the goldsmith, his spirites ravisshed of thilke womannisshe melodye, caughte love to the mayde, wel the more as, tikled that he was with wedding, alle thinges ronnen to-gidere. Natheles, for he hadde even over-past hir, he ne dorste nat turne ayein; he was unhardy as a mayde that dyeth in hir smok bifore she cast it uppe for hir delyt; but, al so sone as he was fer as bowe-shot, it ran him in minde that a man received mayster goldsmith goon sithen ten yeer, burgeys, and aboute two so old as a dogge, mighte

mighte biholde a wommannes frount if him liste, wel the more that his herte quapped faste. Wher-fore, he torned right aboute as mente he to walke on outher weye. Thanne, com he ayein up to thilke mayde: she was holdinge by a corde hir povre cow that grased up-on the syde of a grene dich by the path.

"What! dere childe," seyde he, "ben ye so lyght of catel, ye doon swich maner werk on a sonday? Ben ye nat afered, ye be sent to prisoun?"

"Sire," answerde the mayde, castinge hir eyen doun, "I ne have nought to fere, for I bilonge to the abbeye. My lord abbot hath us yeven leve to bringen out the cow at-after even-song."

"Is your cow, thanne, derere to you than your soule?"

"For sothe, my lord, oure beest is verrailiche halvendel oure pore lyf."

"Me thinketh straunge, my childe, how ye be povre and thus shrouded, clouted as a perche, bar-foot up-on the wey, on a sonday, whyl ye bere wel more richesse than ye trede in al the conventes grounde. Tho of the toun sholde, with-oute doute, you seken and tene by love."

"Nay, my lord, I bilonge to the abbeye," seyde she, shewinge the gold-smith a ring aboute hir lefte arm, as the beestes of the feeldes aboute the nekke, but with-oute a belle. Thanne, threw she so woful a lokinge on the burgeys,

burgeys, he wex al sorweful for-why by wey of the eyen ben caught felinges of the herte whan they are stronge.

"Sey! what is this?" quod he eft, as he longed to asken forth up-on every thing; and he atasted the manicle in which was graven the abbeyes cote. But, al were it ful large-shewinge, he nolde caste on it his yë.

"My lord, ich am doughter to a bonde-man, and what man that joynede him to me in wed-lok wolde falle in servâge, al were he burgeys, and bilonge to the abbeye, body and good. If elles he lovede me, yet wolde his children be thewe. So, am I bileft and forsaken as a pore beste of the feeldes. But that me greveth alder-worst: I shal ben y-coupled til a bonde-man by oure lord abbot wher and whan-so him list; and, were I lasse loothly than I nam, yet, up-on sighte of my ring, the moste lovyere wolde flee fro me as the blake deeth."

And, as she spak, she pulled the cow by a corde to doon hir folwen on.

"Of what age ben ye?" axed the goldsmith.

"I wot nat, my lord, but oure sir abbot hath it marked."

This grete distresse wrong the herte of the gode man that hadde, longe a tyme, eten the bitter breed of adversitee. He gan walken by the mayde along to riverwardes, amiddes a stillenesse wel stuffed of mochel feling, lokinge on the shene forhed, the fleshly rody armes, the quenly girdelstede, the feet, over-dusted but shapen

shapen as a vergene Marie, and the tendre fetures of this mayde, the soothfaste lyknesse of Seynte Genoveva, patrounesse of Paris and of maydenes that live in feeldes. Yet think wel that thilke beau-coq, span-newe from heved to fote, gessed how joly were the whyte brestes of thilke mayde that were, for shamfast grace, bisily covered under a sory clooth and he hadde appetyt to hem as a scole boy fayn on is of an appel by an hoot day. And, beth ye siker, thise rounde parcels of nature hette good thrift, for monkes holde the beste of alle thing. And, ay the more she was werned to the burgeys, the more his mouth watred for this lufsom fruyt and his herte gan sterten up un-til his throte.

"Ye have a goodly cow," quod he.

"Lyketh yow a litel wight milk?" answerde she, "it is so warm in thise erly dayes of May. Ye ben ful fer fro toun."

Lo! the cloudelees welken was of pers hewe, glowinge as a forge; alle thing were lusty for yonghede, the leves, the luft a-heigh, maydenes, beaux-coqs; the erthe was warm, grene and swote-savoured. Thilke sely profering withoute thought of mede, sith a besaunt nadde nat quyted the wonder goodliheed of swiche wordes; thanne, the pore byrdes lowly bering as she torned aboute, strook to the herte the goldsmith which hadde fayn bistowed this mayde in the shoon of a quene and leyd Paris at hir fete.

"Nay,

"Nay, dere, I nam nat athirst of milk, but of you, whom that I wolde make free out of bondage, if I may."

"It can nat ben. From tyme of my forme-faderes, sone after sone and doughter after doughter hath been boren to thralshipe. Thus was I, and so shullen my children her-after, for the abbot ne leteth us nat slake of ofspringe."

"What?" seyde the Tourangeau, "nath no lovyere assayed, for youre brighte eyen, to byen your freedom, as I, of the king?"

"No, it sholde coste to dere: for-thy tho that ich am un-to plesinge, they gon awey lightly as they come."

"And have ye nat bi-thought yow to asterte til another contree, in-fere with a lovyere rydinge up-on a swifte courser?"

"O, yis. But, my lord, and I were caught, I sholde be to-hanged at the leeste wey, and my swete herte, yet a lord, wolde lese demeynes mo than oon, bisyde-forth other thing. I nam nat worth so mochel goodes. And wel lenger ben the armes of th' abbot than swifte my feet. For-thy, I live in humble buxumnesse to godde that hath me bi-stowed heer."

"And what man is your fader?"

"He clippeth the vynes of the abbeye yerdes."

"What doth your moder?"

"She is lavender in the grete court."

"And what mighte be your name?"

"I

"I ne have no name, beau sir. My fader was cristened as Steven, my moder is Stevenes good-wyf, and ich am Tienette, your servaunt."

"O goodly myn," seyde the goldsmith, "never nath me caught womman as ye, and I wene, your herte it is fulfild of selly richesses. Wher-fore, sith ye ben appered in thilke tyme whan I was drawinge un-to purpos to take me an help-meet, me thinketh I see heer an avys from hevene, and, if I may lyke yow, so take me in gree as I am your freend." The mayde gan of-newe hir eyen doun to casten. Thilke wordes were souned in swich manere, sobreliche and felingly, thilke Tienette wepte.

"Nay, my lorde," answerde she, "I sholde ben cause of tenes a thousand and of your wofulle day. For a pore bonde-mayden, it is y-nough a litel talking."

"Ho!" cryede Anseau, "ye ne witen nothing, childe, which mayster ye ben delinge with."

The Tourangeau gan blessen him and, with hondes joyned, seyde:

"I hete avow to Seynt Elias, wardeyn of goldsmithes, that I shal hewe a peire habitácles of gold-beten silver, of my sotileste werkmanshipe. In that oon, shal ben an imáge of oure lady the vergene for thanke of my dere wyves libertee; in that other: myn forseide patroun, by my thrift in makinge free Tienette, a thral her-by, so she me helpe. Of myn owene wille, I swere by my soule to holde forth in this emprise,

emprise, to despenden for it al my good, never swerving til lyf me forsake. God hath herd me wel, (quod he) and hast thou, swete herte?" seyde he, drawinge to the mayde.

"O! my lord, y-see; my cow is renninge over londe," creyede she, wepinge at knees of hir man, "I shal love you al my lyf, but take ayein your biheste."

"Go we after the cow," seyde the goldsmith as he hir up-caughte, nat daringe kisse hir, though yet she were al boun.

"Ye," quod she, "for I sholde be beten."

And, lo, the goldsmith gan sterte after the acorsed cow, that ne sette nat a goos wing for lovyeres; but she was swythe hent by hornes and holden with ful gripe of Tourangeau that, up-on the leeste occasioun more, hadde throwen hir in the eyr as a stree.

"God be with you, dereling. If ye go in-to toun, as seke me neigh to Seynt Leu's. Ich am y-clept mayster Anseau, goldsmith til oure lige; I dwelle with th' image of Seynt Elias. Telle me, ye ben in this feelde on sonday next. I wol nat lete but I come, though rayn poure doun."

"Ye, my goode lord. For metinge with you, wolde I springe over hegges and gladly, for kindenesse, ben youres with-outen wem of yow, elles sholde ich abye it in lyf her-after. Lo, as til the glade houre, I shal bidde god for you wel faste."

Tho gan she stonde stille as any stoon seynt,

hir

hir eyen folwinge the burgeys which that wente his wey with slowe steppes and loked bakwarde now and thanne; and whan that he was out of hir sighte, she bilefte there til it were eve, nat knowinge but it nas al a dreem; thanne, com she hoom late and was y-bete for-why she was y-taried in untyme, but she felede nat the strokes. The gode burgeys loste al appetyt of mete and drinke and shette his shoppe: his minde, his feyth, his inwarde sighte and al the chere of his herte were only this mayde.

Now thanne, on morwe, wente he him forth, in greet drede for to speke with the lord abbot; but, by the weye, thoughte he wel to have of his syde a court-man and, so, yede to the kinges paleys that stood that time in citee.

And, for-as-muche as he was holden dere of everichoon for his prudence, kindenesse and his fetis werkes of goldsmithrie, the kinges chamberleyn, for a swete-herte of which he had maad, as by wey of frendelihede, a golden spyce-box wel-bigoon of gemmes, highte him his help, leet sadle his hors and a hakenay for the goldsmith, with whom he rood forth to the abbeye and asked after th' abbot, daun Hugon de Sennecterre, a man of nynety yeer and three age. Now, the chamberleyn, as he was y-comen in-to halle with the goldsmith, wel a-choked to abyde his ende, he bad Hugon graunte him biforn-hond a bone that lay in his mighte, the graunting wher-of sholde plese him. To this, replyed daun abbot, as he shook his

his heed, that the book forbad him utterly that he nat thus plegge his trouthe.

"Thanne thus, leve fader," seyde the chamberleyn, "the kinges gold-smith hath cast his herte til a mayde of your abbeye, and I axe you, as I may deserve it un-to you, to make hir free."

"What oon is she?" axed the abbot atte burgeys.

"She is called Tienette," seyde the goldsmith, coye.

"O!" seyde old good Hugon, smylinge, "thilke angle-hook hath drawen a fyn fish. This is a hevy caas and I ne may nat assoile it al sole."

"I woot, fader, what this word is worth," seyde the chamberleyn, frouncinge his browes.

"Gode sire," quod the abbot, "wite ye what the mayde is worth?"

The abbot bad fecchen Tienette, telling his clerk to lete hir don fetys clothing and make hir as gay as he mighte.

"Your love is in peril," seyde the chamberleyn to the goldsmith, and drow him on-syde. "Putte awey this fantasye. Ye shulle meet any-wher, and eek also at kinges court, with som vertuous lady yong and fair that wold fayn wedde you. For which, if nede were, oure lige mighte helpe you forth to som lordshipe that, by lengthe, wolde growe in-to a hous of note. Ben ye nat stuffed of florins wel y-nough to bi-ginne a lordly linage?"

"I